THE MID-VICTORIAN WOMAN ARTIST:
1850 - 1879

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ABSTRACT

The female artist has been almost invisible in historical accou of the mid-Victorian period, yet between 1850 and 1879 many mov were made towards recognising women as practitioners within the field of the fine arts, and indeed, the woman artist was a part the 'woman question' which so exercised the period. There is a stereotypical figure and stereotypical notions of 'woman's art' at large in the mid-Victorian period which do much to obscure a distort the actual activities and achievements of women practis in painting, sculpture and graphic art within the period.

The situation of the woman aspiring to be an artist was very cl determined by the situation of the mid-Victorian woman in socie at large. Particular factors, however, which form important pa of her circumstances are education, exhibition, patronage, and employment. Within the period, education was seen as the most crucial factor in allowing women to test their capabilities in fine arts, though many quarters of opinion, throughout the mid- century period, held that women were more, and fundamentally, f for the applied arts of design or craft than fine art, and woul never produce great art regardless of the opportunity they migh offered. The validity and development of such opinion can be t by examining the work which women did produce in this period du which their identity was being resolved, and by considering the critical responses made to their work. Unfortunately, much of actual evidence is now lost or untraced, leaving only verbal wi or reproductions to stand for the paintings, drawings, and scul which the mid-Victorian woman artist produced. When she and he work are taken into account, however, it can be seen that the traditional face of mid-Victorian art, as heretofore defined an described, should be corrected if an accurate and full picture the art of the mid-Victorian period is to be drawn up. During years 1850 to 1879, the woman artist became a recognisable figu the art scene such as she had not been before, although later historians have largely failed to recognise the fact.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Victorian artist has, one might think, been studied at great length already: we know about his annual (not to say, eternal) tussle with the Royal Academy, which was the crucial key to fame we are familiar with his struggle to win state patronage in public competition and private patronage from the up-and-coming middle classes; we recognise his efforts to navigate the tricky waters of didacticism, morality and sentiment in art, whilst having to face the tide of Preraphaelitism in the middle of the century - these are all well-trodden areas of scholarly investigation. But what of her attempts to storm the ramparts of the Academy; her efforts to gain a commission, sell a work, attract a review; her choice in the painterly Battle of the Styles - what, in short, of the female Victorian artist? Since her own day she has received scant attention and remains relatively invisible, although modern feminist scholarship has gone some way towards correcting that circumstance: Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris included some British nineteen century artists in their exhibition and catalogue, Women Artists 1550-1950 (1976); Germaine Greer's book, The Obstacle Race (1979 considered some painters active in this country in the period; Anthea Callen's survey of women in the Arts and Crafts movement, Angel in the Studio (1979) discussed some questions relating to female painters and sculptors of the same era; and the recent an as yet unpublished researches of Charlotte Yeldham Campbell and Deborah Cherry will, when made generally available, go a long wa towards giving to the Victorian woman artist some of the limeligh of which her confrères have enjoyed the monopoly heretofore.[1] This survey, however, will seek to fill a gap left even by these researches, in taking a close and detailed look at what was the most crucial period of the nineteenth century, as far as women artists were concerned, describing and analysing the situation i which they found themselves and the ways in which that situation altered, while attempting to bring into focus some of the female figures from that period, which time and scholarly neglect have blurred.

Art historians' corporate neglect of Victorian women artists cannot be explained by a lack either of their numbers or their industry: although they were undoubtedly a minority, female artists were a decidedly conspicuous minority in the middle of th nineteenth century, and continued to be so for the remainder of the 1800's. Census returns indicate the increasing conspicuity of female artists, simply in terms of numbers - 1841:278, 1851: 548, 1861:853, 1871:1069 [2] - and this expansion is reflected in the events of the period. In 1857, the Society of Female Artist was established [3]; in 1859, the first concerted attack on the sex discrimination practised by the Royal Academy was made, with a public demand that its schools be opened to women; in 1860, the first female student entered those schools, and in 1868 a woman first won the Gold Medal therein; in 1874, a woman's work became the sensation of the London art season for the first time that anyone could remember (this being Elizabeth Thompson's painting "The Roll Call"); in 1876, Ellen Clayton's two-volume book, English Female Artists, became the first written work to devote itself to that subject. It was in the mid-century period moreover, that moves were made in society at large that substantially enlarged women's participation in many spheres of activity: the 'woman question', in art and in life, was the burning issue of the mid-century period, and therefore it is this period which it is necessary to examine in detail if the Victorian woman artist is to be properly located, described and assessed. The mid-century period will here be taken to mean the years between 1850 and 1879 [4], thus taking into account several generations of women, the oldest of whom began their art practic at the very beginning of the Victorian age (or even before), and the youngest of whom were still in their prime as the twentieth century arrived.

In 1859, Anna Jameson - who, by her own example, established a new relationship between women and the arts within the period - wrote:

> "... however we may deprecate the idea, it cannot be denied that we are in the midst of a moral and social conflict, which is disturbing the deepest elements of our moral and social life, compared to which all political and national conflicts are superficial and transient..." 5

She meant the 'woman question'; and, truly, in the mid-century, both men and women were seriously questioning the very bases of Victorian society. Not only did the period witness the advent of the fight for women's suffrage - the first petition for extending the vote to women appeared before Parliament in 1866 - but the first Married Women's Property Act was presented to Parliament in 1857 (by Erskine Perry), as too was the Marriage and Divorce Bill (by Lord Cramworth). And the tide of thinking which bore John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor at its head washe ashore a generation of women such as Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Barbara Leigh Smith (later Bodichon), (fig.93), spiritual daughters of Jameson, whose liberal fathers gave them an upbringing which heralded the many changes which they devoted their lives to achieving,[6] of which those in the art world hinted at above, were but a specialised manifestation. An upsurge in the efforts of women in many non-domestic spheres extended readily to the realm of the visual arts. The prevailing convicti that society comprised man's sphere and woman's sphere, and that one's best efforts should be devoted to trying to attain the highest attributed to one's sex, without questioning the rationa on which the attribution of those virtues was based, was gradual to be exposed as the arrogation by men of the exciting, demandin fulfilling and consequential activities in society and the condemnation of women to the relative, supportive and dependent activities in society. As Mrs. Strutt had the forthrightness to point out in her book The Feminine Soul, published in 1857:

> "Man possessing superior physical strength, and having, through the agency of that strength, constituted himself master of the whole earth, can of course assign to woman whatever station in society may be most agreeable to himself." 7

The debate centring on that realisation stirred and eventually shook the mid-century. As an anonymous writer declared in the Athenaeum in 1858:

> "Among the various classifications of the present day there is one which is rising into importance, as well by the action of law as of opinion: we mean the division of the human race into men and women.... (This) is not a joke: the distinction of man and woman, their separate as well as their joint rights, begins to occupy the attention of our whole community, and with no small effect." 8

The resultant discontent among the few and the consequential debate among the many had, among its other results, that of giving a new hope and incentive to women aspiring to be artists; there arose an increased interest among women in art and an increasing conviction that women could be artists - this thesis will chart the progress of that conviction.

One reason why historians have heretofore neglected female Victorian artists to such effect, rendering them well-nigh invisible, might well be that it has been difficult to take them seriously: what sort of consideration, after all, is deserved by such a person as that conjured up by the passage below?

> "An English lady without her piano, or her pencil, or her fancy work, or her favourite French authors and German poets, is an object of wonder, and perhaps of pity... Painting, and even modelling, are not only pursued in the quiet of the home, they furnish subjects for an amateur exhibition... All accomplishments have the one great merit of giving a lady something to do; something to preserve her from ennui; to console her in seclusion; to arouse her in grief; to compose her to occupation in joy...." 9

Her visualisation is provided by Samuel Baldwin's painting of 1857, "Sketching from Nature", (fig. 1) and in the frontispiece to Ward Lock's publication of a year previously, Elegant Arts for Ladies, (fig.2) whose recommended uses of female creativity include Diaphanie, Ornamental Leather Work, Imitation Oil

Painting, Persian Painting, Potichomanie, Porcupine Quill Work, Pictures in Sand and Sea-weed Pictures.[10] Yet, closer investigation reveals that such a character as Baldwin's and Ward Lock's editors' female artists is no more a true representative of the Victorian woman artist than is Thackeray's Clive Newcombe of the male equivalent: that is to say, there is some fact there, but more fiction, and even more mystification. This thesis means to show the missing parts of the reality, by considering the different elements of her situation (education, exhibition, patronage) which made her what she was, as well as what she seems to be, and by discussing her work, as being the primary evidence thereof. A close look will then be taken at a few specific examples of the species, so that it can ultimately be established both what she was in particular and what she was in general.

This closer examination reveals almost immediately, however, that there are clear reasons why such a stereotype as Baldwin's young lady could appear, in the first place, as the type of the female artist in this period. Ellen Clayton, a pioneer in the study of the Victorian woman artist (whose book, English Female Artists, published in 1876, will be closely considered later in this chapter), observed in 1876:

> "In the early part of the present century, although many ladies of rank and consideration were distinguished by their skill as amateurs in drawing and painting, an odd prejudice existed among some heads of families and schools against young girls learning art. It was regarded as 'a sad waste of time', and as clashing with the interest of music and French exercises. Poonah painting, and similar grotesque absurdities, were permissible, but drawing was almost vigorously tabooed in most instances." 11

A lengthier articulation of similar ideas is found in the critic Philip G. Hamerton's Thoughts about Art, published in 1862; he allows that women are encouraged to draw, but, he maintains with indignation:

> "A feeble dilettantism in drawing seems to be considered essential to every young lady. But as Society requires that ladies should draw badly, so she carefully makes it impossible that they should ever have a chance of drawing well; the truth being, that respectable persons, for the most part, have no interest in art sufficiently powerful to overcome their intense horror of whatever they are pleased to consider 'unfeminine'..." 12

It is just here, in notions of feminity, that first is found the explanation for our delicate, dabbling stereotype, the figure whom it is impossible to take seriously when one is studying the Victorian artist. Femininity was a major requirement of the ideal Victorian woman, who was a complex creature, as modern writers are currently finding to their fascination:

> "That masterpiece of myth and fantasy, of sugar and spice and everything nice - the ideal Victorian woman - was a uniquely paradoxical creature. Revered as a semi-sacred mother figure, but considered incapable of sexual enjoyment; regarded as superior to man morally and spiritually, but held to be inferior to him in intellect and personality; credited with enormous influence at precisely the moment in modern history when she was probably most powerless; ostensibly idolised as the bearer of the 'stainless sceptre of womanhood' in terms which seemed to suggest a measure of contempt; lauded (within limits) for her physical charms, while her normal sexual processes were labeled 'pathological'; surely there are few beings who have been described in such contradictory terms." 13

The precise ingredients of femininity, though, are made widely explicit in mid-Victorian culture: from The Leisure Hour magazine, 'a family journal of instruction and recreation', towards the end of 1856, a hint as to wherein femininity lies:

> "What a Woman should be Alphabetically. A woman should be Amiable, Benevolent, Charitable, Domestic, Economical, Forgiving, Generous, Honest, Industrious, Judicious, Kind, Loving, Modest, Neat, Obedient, Pleasant, Quiet, Reflecting, Sober, Tender, Urbane, Virtuous, 'Xemplary, Zealous". 14

Similarly, an article in the Saturday Review in mid-1870, under the title "Womanliness", mused thus on its feminine ideal:

> "She has always been taught that, as there are certain manly virtues, so are there certain feminine ones; and that she is the most womanly among women who has those virtues in greatest abundance and in the highest perfection. She has taken it to heart that patience, self-sacrifice, tenderness, quietness, with some others, of which modesty is one, are the virtues more especially feminine; just as courage, justice, fortitude, and the like, belong to men. Passionate ambition, virile energy, the love of strong excitement, self-assertion, fierceness, and an undisciplined temper, are all qualities which detract from her idea of womanliness, and which make her less beautiful than she was meant to be; consequently she has cultivated all the meek and tender affections, all the unselfishness and thought for others which have hitherto been the distinctive property of woman, by the exercise of which she has done her best work, and earned her highest place." 15

It is easy to see the effect of such notions of femininity on the ladylike stereotype which purports to represent the Victorian woman artist. What a woman was supposed to be in mid-Victorian society, persisted, whatever else she might want to be, and a place was found for women in art only if they fitted in with notions of the archetypal woman and womanliness. Unwomanly art was treated, to some extent, as the exception which proved the rule, but the very rule's credibility suffered as the mid-century proceeded. As Barbara Leigh Smith (Bodichon) asserted as early as 1857:

> "To think a woman more feminine because she is frivolous, ignorant, weak, and sickly, is absurd; the larger-natured a woman is, the more decidedly feminine will she be; the stronger she is, the more strongly feminine. You do not call a lioness unfeminine, though she is different in size and strength from the domestic cat, or mouse." 16

Her work did not correspond to the rule: she seems to have been

able, in her watercolour landscapes, to transmit the qualities which she could see women might have, even if they were not expected (or allowed, even) to display them. Critical comment ran to this sort of observation: "... she never fails to show perception of purpose", ... "The drawings show enterprise and ambition" ... "They are remarkable for spirit and freedom". [17](fig These were the qualities which were not comprehended by the archetype, which critics felt bound to label 'masculine', which convention spoke against when it said that women could not be active and expressive in the world at large without 'desexing themselves', which, because they challenged the stereotypical image of woman (and therefore of woman's art), put the artist beyond the pale, out of the field of discussion. Thus such women artists as Bodichon have remained practically invisible in the history that has been written of Victorian art [18], and to give them a place in that history is one of the purposes of this study.

One would have hoped that, rather than being seen as impossible to discuss, such figures would have been seen as challenging, and therefore discussed at even greater length. The evidence does not support that hope however, for though Bodichon was by no means ignored within her own time, the attractions of the alternative such as she set up, proved lesser than the appeal of the stereotype, resulting in her disappearance from subsequent art-historical accounts of her period. The American art historian, Eleanor Tufts, suggests that post-Victorian scholars are to blame for this distortion of the picture:

> "The basic art survey books used today only rarely allude to the names of women artists, and even most histories dealing with specific periods of art do not seriously consider their work.... Since the Victorian age, named ironically after its female monarch, a conspiracy of silence seems to have descended upon male chroniclers, and while the history of art was developing into a respected and crowded discipline, historians have conspicuously, if perhaps unconsciously, overlooked or relegated to footnotes the accomplishments and even the existence of women artists." [19]

Within the period itself, the hold which the stereotype had over 'chroniclers', sometimes female as well as male, led to an expectation of certain work from women which was not expected from men, which was expected not on grounds of character, skill, or training, but simply and solely on grounds of gender. This begs the question of whether the period displayed such a distinct phenomenon as 'female art', and whether what the female artists of the time produced was, in fact, consistently different - and different in the presumed ways - from what male artists produced. This question will be discussed, and an answer to it broached, in Chapter 5, but it is appropriate here to introduce some aspects of the arguments which arose in the face of an increasing and newly vigorous juxtaposition of women and art in the middle of the century. There were two main strands to the debate: one which concerned genius and one which concerned diligence or industry; these interwove, according to the prejudice or insight of the writer or speaker, and ebbed and flowed as developments in art education for women and in art achievement by women came to pass. If these two lines of argument seem to overlap or even merge in the following pages, this will only reflect the confusion and contradiction which frequently characterised the debate over women artists in the period. By and large, however, the genius argument was used by those who could not conceive of women as artists, whereas the diligence argument was employed by those who could contemplate that possibility, though their cheerfulness in the face of it might be very variable.

There undoubtedly was a widespread notion that a woman could not become an artist, that the two were mutually exclusive; Ruskin wrote, in the late 1850's, to a female acquaintance who aspired to be a painter:

> "You must resolve to be quite a great paintress; the feminine termination does not exist, there never having been such a being as yet as a lady who could paint. Try and be the first..." 20

Later, his tacit belief that such a being was, in fact, an impossible creature, came to light when the work of Elizabeth Thompson (later Butler) seemed to call for some reassessment of established prejudices. He wrote in 'Academy Notes', 1875:

> "I never approached a picture with more iniquitous prejudice against it than I did Miss Thompson's (fig.11): partly because I have always said that no woman could paint: and secondly, because I thought, what the public made such a fuss about must be good for nothing..." 21

Less than a decade later, he was over-compensating for his previous bias sufficiently to declare, in 'The Art of England' lectures, with reference to Francesca Alexander and Lilian Trotter:

> "For a long time I used to say, in all my elementary books, that, except in a graceful and minor way, women could not paint or draw. I am beginning, lately, to bow myself to the much more delightful conviction that nobody else can." 22

Ruskin is perhaps not a reliable type, in that he was constantly contradicting himself throughout his career, but his importance in the period cannot responsibly be denied, and he is typical in his adaptation to the progressive attention which women artists commanded during this period. He is also representative of commentators on the question in that his notions of what constituted great art were tortuously bound up with ideas of genius and standards of technical ability, in a complex and largely unresolved way. Thus, Ruskin was endlessly urging the women whom he 'taught' to improve their technical skills - to learn to draw properly, to copy the best models, to take their talent seriously, to apply themselves - yet he saw the artist as having a special quality (whether it be named genius or not) which he neither envisaged women as possessing nor encouraged women to cultivate. Passages from the now notorious Sesame and

Lilies lectures, as well as passages from his letters to female protegées, give ample illustration of this. [23] The mutual exclusion of the concepts 'woman' and 'artist' was seen to devolve upon this point, perhaps, more than upon anything else, since genius seemed to many minds to be emphatically not an inhabitant of the female psyche. Discussing "the natural mode of exercising female influence", the Spectator in 1856 allowed that women might operate in many fields, including art, but with crucial limitations:

> "Women have appeared in the arts, in literature, in public business, as the handmaids of the greatest human influences. They can give expression to music where music becomes the voice of woman. They contribute a very important and useful portion of literature. They can appear as the ruling governors of the world. But into none of these cases enters that process which we may call the working out of reason, which is essentially a masculine function." 24

It was popularly believed that women's brains were smaller than men's [25], and that smaller meant lesser, so that women's inability to create great art needed to be seen as no discredit to them but simply as a fact of life. As a fact of life, of course, it was needless to rail against and fruitless (and impious) to question, so women could be criticised for even trying to create great art. This meant that women's creativity was seen to be more suited to craft than art, or to design rather than painting or sculpture. This affected their art education and the critical reception different types of art work from women received. Critical opinion both embraced and protested this idea that women had no genius: in some quarters, women's work was judged from the premise that of course it was uninspired, while in other quarters women's work was criticised relentlessly for its lack of inspiration. Thus the Athenaeum in 1866:

> "It is strange to find so few who display intellectual grasp, not merely of any method of treating a given subject in Art, but of

> the subject itself. Nine tenths of the works in question must have been made by those who have no insight beyond that of their eyes." 26

This comment was given in a review of the Society of Female Artists exhibition; the same context prompted this similar remark by the Spectator's critic in 1861:

> "There are many (works) which are very clever handiwork, in the manner of certain painters of the day, with all the trick of colour and touch; but thought and originality are seldom felt to have had much concern in the production." 27

The Illustrated London News' reviewer avowed, at the first of the Society's shows, that he did not even expect such things:

> "Strength of will and power of creation belonging rather to the other sex, we do not of course look for the more daring efforts in an exhibition of female artists." 28

In the presumed absence of inspiration, industry was recurrently recommended to women whose work did not meet the male-defined standard of excellence:

> "If a lady will labour with a portion of the earnestness and industry a man must employ she might succeed as well... it is lamentable to notice the effects of idleness and dissipation of mind shown through the almost universal failure in rudimentary studies... We know that if the same concentration of mind had been applied to these pictures which is so often devoted with perfect taste and charming success to the disposition of a walking costume or the tint of a bonnet, the result would have been far other..
> .. ladies, if they would compete in fine art with men - whether in an exhibition open to both sexes, or in one like this - should work like men. There is nothing for it at last but work: no cleverness, no compliments, avail to supply its place..." 29

Such would-be sympathetic criticism at least allowed that there was a way in which artistic success might prove attainable by women, and, indeed, this writer pointed out to his readers a living example of this possibility being achieved. The specific example which this latter critic (writing in the Spectator) would hold up to women for their emulation on this point was Rose Bonheur, who was used throughout the period as a paradigm of all sorts of excellence for women to take note of. Her industry is recommended to Spectator readers in the following terms:

> "Rose Bonheur is the first woman who has taken up art without one vestige of dilettantism, that fatallest of cankers in any serious pursuit. What men study, she can and does; what men can endure, she can and does; what men can work, she can and does...." 30

The fundamental contradiction between this demand for earnest study and the desire for a 'feeble dilettantism' of which Hamerton was so vigorously critical, is seldom tackled head-on by critics promoting either position: in this, Hamerton shows rarely expressed insight. But women themselves could also express a wish for greater diligence from women artists: the Victoria Magazine commented in 1866, confirming that this line of argument had some validity:

> "It is a great pity that so few women ever work up to the point where their paintings cease to be studies and become pictures. Of course we do not mean to infer that every man or woman who can produce a clever correct study, can produce original inventive work, but we regret to see such a number of aimless sketches on the walls of the Royal Academy..." 31

Few women, however, - certainly in the '60's, which seemed such a boom time for women artists - would go so far as Mrs. Sutherland Orr in her article on the subject of "The Future of Englishwomen" in the Nineteenth Century of mid-1878, who gave no hope even to the diligent:

> "Women are intelligent; they are not creative. Whether in their home or beyond it, their successes can only be achieved through the contact with other minds; the impulse to mental action must always come to them from without, or at least the form in which the impulse will be clothed. That men possess the productiveness which is called genius, and women do not, is the one immutable distinction that is bound up with the intellectual idea of sex. We know that women have seldom, perhaps never, been great artists or great composers, and that the number of female writers who can be called great is very small as compared with those who make, or have made, literature the business of their life..." 32

That such a view, though perceptibly reactionary, was still feasible in 1878 indicates how deeply ingrained was the idea that women could not, by their very nature, be special enough to be artists of any note - that they lacked the capacity for genius. The debate on this particular aspect of the 'woman (artist) question' was central to the overall issue throughout the mid-century. Two decades earlier than Mrs. Sutherland Orr, the Spectator's critic had felt able to declare (with unusual liberality):

> "The artistic nature is the same in woman as it is in man; the aim is not different; the means identical, the capacity, when properly developed by study and persistent work, is, as far as we know, equally fitted in each case for the attainment of high imaginative excellence..." 33

and yet the constant emphasis by critics, commentators and many women alike, on the fact of a woman artist's gender, in the '50's and '60's, indicated a general fundamental acceptance of the idea that anything done by women in this field was, necessarily, different, and negatively so, and must be signalled as such. For women's art to be different - or Other, in de Beauvoir's terms [34] - there had to be a norm, from which it was different and which it was other than, and this norm is thus revealed to

be male artists' work. Just as Ruskin, in introducing the term 'paintress' to describe women painters, had revealed the ostensibly neuter term 'painter' as signifying a male artist, most critics distinguished female practitioners as different from the norm by describing them as 'the fair artist', 'the gentle painter', 'this accomplished lady', and so on. Inescapably, such terms read as indications that this artist and this work were not to be considered as one would consider other (i.e. male) artists and art, but were to be viewed from a position which did not expect to find genius welcoming it, did not expect to see that specialness which identifies the 'proper' artist and 'real' art. For instance, Henrietta Ward, one of the most successful of the artists who will be discussed here, hardly ever, even so, escaped the identification as woman first and artist second: "The lady artists are getting now a powerful body. First comes Mrs. Ward.."; "Among the ladies, Mrs. Ward makes a distinguished figure.."; "(This is a picture) placing Mrs. Ward decidedly at the head of the lady contributors"; "Mrs. E.M. Ward takes precedence of the female contributors...". [35]

This approach set women apart from men most effectively in the reader's mind, presenting for his/her consideration a number of works of art and a number of works by women: this did not, however, reflect the way in which works were hung at exhibitions thus reviewed, but the way in which works were approached and assessed. Emphatically implied is the supposition that the women's art will be distinctly and predictably different from the art made by men, that it will be clearly 'woman's work'. The question of what female art was supposed to be, and to what extent it was a reality and to what extent an imposed fantasy, will be considered closely in Chapter 5, but suffice it to show here that, until the latter end of the period (unless a commentator were very progressive or very acute), it mattered not, to either the critical or the popular mind, whether an artist's work in fact confirmed or contradicted the prevalent stereotype of the woman's picture - it was considered as such, or as if it should have been such. Thus:

> "she possesses clear ideas of all the more delicate emotions of what (sic) her sex is susceptible, and knows how to illustrate them with taste and expression" ("In Doubt" by Anna Charretie, 1870);
> "It is seldom that so deep-toned and soberly-coloured a picture comes from the hands of a lady" ("Painting" by Lucy Madox Brown, 1869);
> "... nothing can exceed the accuracy with which the leaves and grass are represented, but the subject is scarcely suitable for a lady.". ("Just Shot" by Emma Walter, 1855);
> "Strange to say, the only historical work which, by its treatment, can be considered as such, is a picture by a lady..." ("Escape of Lord Nithsdale from the Tower" by Emily Osborn, 1861), (fig.12). 36

Such a random selection of typical critical comments reflects very clearly on the role that the feminine, of which Hamerton was so impatient above, played in shaping people's prejudices about women's art (prejudice is here meant in its literal sense as indicating pre-judgment). A selection of critical comments on the work of particular artists may serve to amplify this point, as well as to hint at the change in the confidence that critics, at least, felt in this sort of implicit categorisation. Emily Mary Osborn is the artist who was last referred to in the critical quotations given above: in 1861 the same picture by her, "The Escape of Lord Nithsdale" was reviewed thus in the Illustrated London News:

> "... a capacity for historical painting to an extent quite extraordinary in a female, and which places her in an elevated rank in comparison with the most celebrated of her male compeers." 37

The same periodical greeted her 1870 "Lost" as "creditable to its author, both as woman and painter", [38] (fig.13). However, this work was more sagaciously criticised by the Art Journal's reviewer as: "worthy, we will not say, of a 'female artist', now a term of contempt - it holds its place strongly by its genuine pictorial merits." [39]

Joanna Mary Boyce (later Wells) presented critics with work that, also, defied definition as 'woman's work' as they understood it: "Mrs. H.T. Wells vindicates her claim to be considered one of our best female painters by her striking 'Veneziana'... there is unusual force in the execution" commented the Saturday Review at the Academy in 1861, with the Times echoing: "There are few more workmanlike pieces of painting in the Exhibition that this." 40 (fig "... Without sinning on the side of the masculine, Miss Boyce paints with a manliness which there are few men to emulate", [41] the Spectator responded in 1855. The Athenaeum's obituary notice excused her lack of feminity for her: "As a young and consequently incompletely practised artist, Mrs. Wells' work erred rather in excess of strength than the common fault of feminine tameness." 42

As feminist opinion became more evident in the art world, the singling out of women as women could be done in a positive way, in the spirit of what would nowadays be called positive discrimination [43], but at the start of the mid-century, and continuingly so for some quarters of opinion, this ghettoising of women artists was motivated by a real conviction that their work was, because performed by women, less interesting and less meritorious than 'proper' (male) art. This was widely accepted to be the true state of affairs, but commentators sympathetic to women explained this by pointing to the woman's lack of art education and poverty of encouragement from the right quarters (specifically the Academy); gradually, in fact, the education argument came to eclipse the discussion over genius. Education will be discussed in Chapter 2. But over and above such obvious factors as education - or, rather, perhaps, beneath and behind such factors - lay the social fabric which militated against the acceptance of women as artists.

There were great structures of reasons why female artists were what they were, built upon various factors in mid-Victorian society, as well as upon the aims and practices of mid-Victorian art, but few critics took these up for analysis. Elizabeth

Ellett, a woman interested in art and in women, in her book Women Artists in all ages and countries, published in 1859 (which will be considered later in this chapter)[44], was concerned to point out to the undiscerning, but increasingly concerned critic and public, some of the reasons why women and art appeared to relate in such an unsatisfactory way:

> "Such occupations (as copper engraving and miniature painting) might be pursued in the strict seclusion of home, to which custom and public sentiment consigned the fair student. Nor were they inharmonious with the ties of friendship and love, to which her tender nature clung. In most instances women have been led to the cultivation of art through the choice of parents or brothers. While nothing has been more common than to see young men embrace the profession against the wishes of their families and in the face of difficulties, the example of a woman thus deciding for herself is extremely rare." [45]

The selection of the world of art as a field for a career was, of course, to an almost exclusive extent, a choice which offered itself to a middle-class person, and it is the particular lack of freedom of the middle-class female that Ellet conjures up here: the working-class woman was a worker outside the home and a worker within it, while the aristocratic female could quite acceptably find some enthusiasm which she could earnestly take up and fill some of her yawning leisure time with; but the bourgeoise woman was supposed to appear idle within her home (if not, she was not handling her servants properly or she was in the embarrassing position of having too few of them) and to be inactive outside it (for her husband or father was supposed to be able to afford almost total leisure for her). Such women were relative creatures, to borrow Françoise Basch's term:[46] they had practically no autonomy, and their choices were largely determined by their place in the social system of mid-Victorian society. They were identified fundamentally as a woman, and to seek an identity as an artist also, was to come into conflict with that fundamental, socially-imposed identity. For the mid-

Victorian mind held very fixed and ready notions about women, and the female stereotype was very precious to a society which found, as the 19th century progressed, that certain givens were no longer as axiomatically true as they had been thought to be. Ideas of Woman overshadowed perceptions of women: another reason why women artists of the period have remained scarcely visible, their separate characters hidden in the shadow of the generalising stereotype.

Home and the family were seen as the essential context for women, the domestic scene the natural habitat for her; marriage and motherhood were her joint destiny.[47] These factors seemed, to many, to effectively rule out any other possibilities for the bourgeoise woman and, indeed, the assumptions that went with the married and the maternal state - that one would confine one's interests and activities to the home, that one would not be a breadwinner but would be financially supported, that one would have time for nothing but wifedom and motherhood - were forbidding to some women's ambition and fatal to others'. For women aspiring to be artists, the particular issues raised here are twofold: the family connection had a great influence on a woman's ability to be an artist, and was often discussed by commentators, insofar as most women who persisted in art during the period came from artistic families; the assumption that a woman - from the middle classes, at least - need not earn her living (because her husband would be engaged in doing that for her) seemed to doom her to the eternal state of amateurism. These two aspects need close examination, but before doing that, it would be appropriate here to recall the notion already mentioned in passing, that seemed so important a question to many commentators on the topic of women artists, of the danger of women 'desexing' themselves by non-domestic activities taken to a serious level. For it seems that this concern is not simply for the survival of femininity, but, by extension, for the continuance of marriage and the family. Witness the Saturday Review, discussing 'Womanliness' in an article published in August 1870 and already adverted to here:

> "Women are swarming out at all doors, running hither and thither among the men, clamouring for arms that they may enter into the fray with them, anxious to lay aside their tenderness, their modesty, their womanliness, that they may become hard and fierce and self-asserting like them, thinking it a far higher thing to leave the home and the family to take care of themselves, or under the care of some incompetent hireling, while they take up the manly professions and make themselves the rivals in trade of their husbands and brothers." 48

A few months later, the same paper returned to the theme, saying in an article entitled "Young Ladies as they are":

> "We have lately heard so much discussion of what is called 'the movement on behalf of women', that it is a relief to find that there are still women in the world whose thoughts are occupied with love, dress, and cookery, and who seem to have neither grand aims nor lofty aspirations, nor any desire for what is called the 'intellectual development' of their sex... Let women enter trades and professions freely, but let them not expect, after they have done so, that they can compete for men's affection with our Rosebud." 49

This periodical seemed particularly to take upon itself the task of combatting the moves that were made in the 1860's and 1870's towards widening women's sphere of activities, and it kept up its resistance to the new ideas; ten years earlier than the articles quoted above, it had carried a response to the new idea of clubs for women in town, which ended firmly:

> "... we have heard of ladies' clubs before, and we do not intend to revive the institution here in England. English ladies have, by God's blessing, a certain character, and a very admirable one. They adorn life by very excellent domestic habits and ways - very sufficient attainments in all the arts and in all literature. Above all they take care of their homes; and their homes and the reading-room and luncheon-room will not go on well together." 50

Thus the challenge which the idea of a profession for women outside the home presented, was clearly seen as a challenge to femininity, marriage and home and family. [51] Some women saw that challenge as dangerous and undesirable, either because they suspected that women would not gain more than they had to lose (Fanny Kortright, "How to use influence", 1874:

> "Let us not band into an army of amazons to seize on artillery and powder magazines, to dissect or to plead in public courts, to talk on platforms to a gaping or deriding assembly. Let us not promote movements which would effectively take the crown from our heads, the sceptre from our hands, the 'fair rose from the forehead of love'. Let us not be suicidal." 52)

or because they did not want, ultimately, to so challenge the status quo (Margaret Oliphant, responding to J.S. Mill's On the Subjection of Women in the Edinburgh Review, 1869:

> "Professional education too is very costly, and the parents of young women to whom self-support is necessary are not generally rolling in wealth; can we then wonder at their reluctance to purchase dearly such a training for their daughter, knowing that the expense will most probably be all in vain, and indeed hoping that her first step in actual life will be to render herself incapable of her profession by a happy marriage?" 53)

But more men were to be heard and read resisting the challenge to the conventions which women's wanting to take up non-domestic activities seriously presented. Men's own interests were, of course, here involved, though they often presented the threat of emancipation as one to women. The Athenaeum carried a review of Virginia Penny's The Employment of Women in 1863, which contained the following comment:

> "It is some consolation, too, that woman will not necessarily lose 'that softness and gentleness that render her so lovely'. Our

> charming author seems to forget that in her ideal state of society there would be less opportunity of cultivating those graces, and fewer admirers to be ensnared..." 54

And thus, very revealingly, Sir Martin Archer Shee recording in his diary the entry of women into the field of professional medicine:

> "If women are found anxious to indulge such questionable tastes, let them by all means do so. I would, if it rested with me, keep the sex pure and undefiled, and confine them to their own recognised sphere of usefulness, and I believe that a majority of the fathers, sons, and brothers of England would agree with me, if they were polled." 55

And thus Ruskin, in 1873:

> "I cannot find expression strong enough for the hatred and contempt I feel for the modern idea that a woman should cease to be mother, daughter, or woman so that she may become a shop assistant or an engineer. You are quite silly in this matter. The duty of a man is to support his wife and children, that of a woman to make him happy in his home, and to bring up his children wisely. No woman is capable of more than that. No man should do less." 56

This recalls us to the two aspects of this question of woman's social identity and role which particularly affect the woman aspiring to the arts, for it is emphatically clear from Shee's and Ruskin's statements that, though the mid-Victorian woman might move from the home of her father to that of her husband, for her to seek to escape from Home was not in order at all, and this belief is often reflected in discussion of women's relation to art: the following comments come from an article that appeared in the Art Journal in 1872 entitled "Art work for Women":

> "Designing seems to offer peculiarly suitable work for women. To whom should we so confidently apply for all that concerns the beautifying of home life as to the presiding spirit of the home?... Engraving again is an art little practised by, but quite possible for, women; and attractive from the fact that it may be done at home... There is perhaps no branch of art-work more perfectly womanly and in every way desirable than painting on china." [57]

Since woman's place was assumed to be in the home, activities which could take place within that environment and which accorded with its routine and mood were viewed favourably in a way that a pastime - never mind a career - which took her out of the house was not. [58] (This, of course, was a very dominant factor in facilitating women's participation in literature, in the period: Mrs. Gaskell relates how Charlotte Bronte would compose her works in the kitchen, if the domestic routine called for it, writing in-between peeling the potatoes.) [59]

Although the writer of the article quoted above states firmly early in the piece that "No reason can possibly be urged why talent in women, if as much cultivated as by men, should not produce the same results", s/he goes on, as has been shown, to assume that the areas in which her talent will, in fact, be cultivated will be determined by their location. Only if within the family, art was already practised and accepted as an activity which did not violate the domestic hearth, might the woman enter into it reasonably readily, and thus the family connection becomes such an important factor in the fate of aspiring women artists: as has already been indicated, this was recognised in the period as a dominant factor. In an article entitled "Female artists and art schools in England" in Art Pictorial and Industrial for August 1870 (which will be examined at length below), J. Cordy Jeaffreson wrote:

> "... it can be shown that the school of female painters was the home in which they ministered to the daily needs and promoted the domestic happiness of the men who were at the same time

> their near relations and their instructors in art... Even nowadays, when so much has been done to bring the artist's calling within the knowledge and reach of persons of every social kind, artistic families yield by far the larger proportion of the women who make art the pursuit of their lives." 60

On the same lines, but with more pungency, Sarah Tytler wrote in her Modern Painters and their Paintings four years later:

> "I may observe, in proof of the difficulty which the technicalities of art must present to women, that of all the women painters whom I have chronicled, I am not aware of one.. who did not overcome the difficulty, by the advantage of an early familiarity with art, from having been the daughter of a painter, or, at least, of an engraver." 61

And such daughters, in the period under discussion, were legion: Agnes Bouvier, Catherine Madox Brown, Lucy Madox Brown, Adelaide Claxton, Florence Claxton, Isabel Constable, Emily Desvignes, Mary Rosenberg, Constance Fripp, Maria Gastineau, Emma Kendrick, Eliza Lance, Jessie Landseer, Emma Landseer, Hannah Linnell, Matilda Lowry, Mary Chalon, Elizabeth Heaphy, Maud Naftel, Anne Nasmyth, Barbara Nasmyth, Charlotte Nasmyth, Elizabeth Nasmyth, Jane Nasmyth, Margaret Nasmyth, Julia Pocock, Frances Rayner, Louise Rayner, Margaret Rayner, Nancy Rayner, Rose Rayner, Frances Redgrave, Mary Severn, Charlotte Vawser, Henrietta Ward, Emily Weigall, Julia Weigall. As well as the daughter of a painter, the mid-Victorian woman artist was often the wife of an artist - Henrietta Ward, Hannah Palmer, Mary Thornycroft, Louise Jopling, Anne Bartholomew, Mary Duffield, Joanna Mary Wells - or the sister of one - Rosa Brett, Emma Landseer, Jessie Landseer, Joanna Mary Boyce, Emma Sandys, Rebecca Solomon. (Such a list shows that the fathers, husbands and brothers, as well as the daughters, wives and sisters, achieved very various degrees of fame.)

Thus, expressions like the following abound when the subject is

an artist of this period:

> "Naturally, with a father, sister, and brothers all painting, it would have been almost strange had she not taken up the pencil... the house in London, people laughingly said, was 'all studio'." ... there was hereditary tendency enough to account for Miss Mary Forster's taking to the brush, and continuing the succession..." 62

It was, of course, noticeably the case that on the mid-Victorian art scene, the family connection played a large part generally, and the dynasty of such as the Nasmyths, and Rayners, and Landseers, and Hayllars, to say nothing of fathers and sons or sets of brothers like the Stones or the Goodalls, characterise the British art world of the time. (It is interesting to note, however, that the most successful artists of the period were, with the exception of Landseer, 'lone rangers'.) But the family connection had a particular effect on women artists, much different and more important in its meaning than for the male artist. It was both positive and negative, for, though the artistic family gave a woman opportunity and encouragement, her relatives' support was very much of a mixed benefit, for while giving with the one hand, it took away with the other: it took her individuality away, contributing to the invisibility that she has suffered from. The shadow in which the mid-Victorian woman artist has stood has often been that cast by her male relatives.

This is not peculiar to the art world, but it has a particular significance for women within it. It is interesting to note, however, that in the field of creative writing - more admittedly a field in which mid-Victorian women succeeded - the family connection did not exist in the same way.[63] In the fine arts, though, the female practitioner of painting, sculpture, or drawing is to be glimpsed peeping out from behind her husband, father, brother, or even son, her petticoats just showing, depending on

how the spotlight or limelight falls. (For example, "His wife, X, also painted..."; "He leaves two daughters who continue the art...") The woman is relative to the man, his wife, daughter or sister - she is defined by him, and identified by reference to him. Thus, Henrietta Ward was usually known as Mrs. E.M. Ward, Rebecca Solomon known as the sister of Abraham and Simeon, Charlotte Nasmyth as Alexander's daughter and Patrick's sister, and so on. The woman did, of course, bear the man's name, and the contemporary custom of the woman taking, on marriage, not only her husband's surname but his first name too, effectively reduced her to an appendage to his fame or position: thus Anne Fayermann was known as Mrs. Valentine Bartholomew, Emma Eburne as Mrs. William Oliver, Mary Rosenberg as Mrs. William Duffield, Joanna Mary Boyce as Mrs. H.T. Wells.

Some women kept the name that they might have made for themselves before they married, conscious no doubt that reputation can easily be lost when the name by which the public knows a person fades from view: Emma Brownlow married the singer Donald King in 1868, after she had been exhibiting for almost two decades, but exhibited as Emma Brownlow King rather than Emma King or Mrs. Donald King, after her change of status; Jane Benham, after her marriage in 1859, exhibited as Benham Hay. Henrietta Ward was in the peculiar position of having married a man who bore the same name as she herself, so that her single and married names had a continuity which was only marred by critics' tendency to neglect her own first name, and call her Mrs. E.M. Ward. Much-married artists, changing their names and titles more than once in their careers, were a confusion to the public and remain so for the historian.[64]

No doubt many women's reputations have been unmade by their change of name, if only because it means that their oeuvre has been divided between two in fact synonymous practitioners, or that the earlier or later portion of their oeuvre has been unidentified. A case in point here was Eliza Fox, who married Frederic Bridell

in 1859, becoming Mrs. Bridell, then married her cousin George Fox in 1871, thereby regaining her original name but, in retaining her first married name, becoming Mrs. Bridell Fox. Louise Jopling, similarly, was born Goode but became Romer in 1860, subsequently Jopling in 1874, and finally Rowe in the '80's: usually known as Louise Jopling, she is sometimes referred to as Mrs. Rowe, and her autobiography is attributed to "Louise Jopling (Mrs. Jopling-Rowe)". Mary Ellen Edwards' case has another ramification, in that she was known as MEE, as well as by her full maiden name of Edwards, and then she became Mrs. Freer in 1866 and afterwards Mrs. Staples in 1872, and is addressed differently at different times in her career, according to her contemporary status.

When the woman's new name was that of another artist, as, it has been suggested, her old name often was, the shadow cast by the family connection is very apparent. It seems that if there were so much as a hint of an artistic father, brother or husband in the woman's pedigree, he was brought forth by critics to stand as a witness for her - more often than not, to stand in front of her - and was used as a yardstick by which to measure her failings: to adopt the negative sense here is nothing more than typical of the critical tendency to think in terms of her failings rather than her merits: the comparison was usually to the woman's disadvantage. Thus, discussion of a woman's work often ran like this:

> "... executed with somewhat of the feeling of the gifted father of the artist, but yet of course far below his standard. The work wants the harmonious colour and cohesion of those of Patrick Nasmyth..." (Charlotte Nasmyth's "Burnham Beeches", 1861)
>
> "(Mrs. Ward's picture) too faithfully reproduces her husband's manner" (Henrietta Ward's "Sion House", 1868) (fig. 15)
>
> "Mrs. McIan follows her husband as closely as possible, in subject and in manner" (Fanny McIan's "Captivity and Liberty", 1850). 65

The criticisms could be more generous, while still comparing:

> "Mrs. McIan's "Highland Emigrants" is exactly in the manner of her late husband, quite as good, equally imaginative, and quite as national, though rather heavy in colour and execution" (Fanny McIan's "Highland Emigrants", 1857)
> "Mrs. Bridell Fox, who, for her father's and husband's sake deserves well of the world of literature and Art, has this year executed a work not unworthy of her antecedents and memories" (Eliza Fox's "Love Letters", 1864)(fig.16).
> "Mrs. Duffield, whose flower pieces are of the highest excellence, and deserve to rank beside the still-life of her husband.." (Mary Duffield's entries at the New Institute in 1862)
> ".. the fruit pieces of Miss Lance are scarcely distinguishable from the displays of hothouse grapes and prize pineapples so industriously set forth at the British Institution and Royal Academy by Mr. Lance. Miss Gastineau, again, works very much like her father, and Miss Agnes Bouvier and Miss C.F. Williams produce faces as pretty and landscapes as interesting as their relatives." (Works by Eliza Lance, Maria Gastineau, Agnes Bouvier and Caroline Williams at the Society of Female Artists exhibition, 1862). 66

A particular victim of such comparative criticism was Henrietta Ward, and a range of the critical comments she typically received will show to what lengths this approach was sometimes taken, depending on the condescension of the critic; and how, in fact, sometimes it could be used to a woman's advantage: 67

> ""The Young May Queen" by Mrs. E.M. Ward shows a decisive advance, and hints that the lady, if this is entirely her own handiwork, may at no distant day rival her lord in the laying on of colour.." (1853) (fig.17)
> "We should have pointed to the "Scene from the camp at Chobham" as a specimen of the manner by which he (E.M. Ward) is best known, did not the catalogue inform us that Mrs. E.M. Ward was the painter of the work in question." (1854)
> "The children in Mrs. E.M. Ward's "Henrietta Maria" are the most praiseworthy features of that elaborate, skilful, but somewhat

theatrical picture, in which the lady has imitated with marvellous accuracy the style and manner of her husband..." (1862)
"("Mary Queen of Scots") is vigorously painted, with good, quiet expression, excellent feeling and colour, and an easy command of the technical resources of composition, drawing and effect, which shames much man's work round about it. If Mrs. Ward indicates her master in her method, this is only natural..." (1863) (fig.18)
"Some traces of this artist's (E.M. Ward) manner are naturally seen in Mrs. Ward's picture, "Mary of Scotland giving her infant to the charge of Lord Mar"..." (1863)
"(Joan of Arc) if too faithfully reproducing the manner of her distinguished husband, has excellent points both of conception and execution." (1867), (fig.19).
"("Incident at Sion House") too faithfully reproduces her husband's manner; but... both the conception and technical characteristics of the picture appear to us not only far in advance of any previous effort by this gifted lady, but to fully authorise entirely independent practice of her art" (1868), (fig.15). 68

In some cases, a surrogate father/husband was found by critics in the male mentor or master, with similarly negative results for her: "the pupil imitates the master, the daughter the parent", commented the Spectator's reviewer of the Society of Female Artists show in 1862: [69]

> "Miss Gillies is well known as a pupil of Henri Scheffer, a painter of impassioned eyes, clustering curls, ivory brows, sowy arms, and other useful Art furniture" (Margaret Gillies' "The Past and the Future", 1857)...
> ... Mrs. Robbinson's "Queen of the Tournament" fails of the effect which its great pains and uncommon cleverness ought to secure for it only because it suggests so irrestibly the manner of a distinguished living painter that people will involuntarily refer it all to him. This is the danger with women. They so often reproduce their masters." (Margaret Robbinson's "Queen of the Tournament", 1867). 70

The general assumption underlying observations such as these, that women were dependent artists, as they were socially dependent beings, will be returned to in Chapter 5 for the effect it produced of women's work being subject to male standards of excellence and referred to male paradigms, even while being seen to be fundamentally different from male art at the same time; but it brings the discussion here on to the second major effect of the fact that women's place was socially conceived as being properly in the bosom of the family (even in the case of working class women, whose absence from the home was seen as a necessary evil), for it bears on the deeply-felt conviction that women's art was inevitably not serious - that the female artist was irresistibly an amateur.

Since it was taken for granted that woman's primary interest should be in marriage and family, and only secondarily might she be drawn to some additional activity (additional, of course, not alternative), that other activity would necessarily be subject to the primary demands of breeding, nurturing and servicing which characterised the wife and mother's lot in the period. If she were thus drawn, popular interest assumed it would be for interest or philanthropy rather than for gain, and to complement the character she was assumed to have rather than to challenge it. Hence Elegant Arts for Ladies, Baldwin's sketcher, and Hamerton's frustrated artist. Not only was the woman assumed to be primarily - or, indeed, exclusively - a wife, a mother, and, not less importantly, a lady, but she was assumed to desire to be this, and therefore to have no intention to be other than a dilettante, a dabbler, a modestly well-meaning Sunday painter - in short, an amateur. One of the major reasons why the question of women artists became such a question during the period under discussion here, is that it became obvious that more and more women were practising art with no such intention: rather, they aspired to be 'proper' artists, and meant correspondingly that their work should be judged as Art.[71] The confusion of critics at this contradiction showed itself in their vacillation between criticism

and gallantry, between scholarship and small talk, in their treatment of women's work. Often the women, themselves, too, showed a like confusion at the contradictions of their own position. Ellet observed that it was common to see men entering the profession of art against family wishes, but uncommon to see women acting thus: it was surely uncommon to see women managing to act in any way contrary to family wishes. More to the point, the evidence leads to the conclusion that it was unusual to see women <u>accepted</u> into the profession - unless their family was already an artistic one; but, even then, the professional status of the female members of the family could be in question, such as it would not be for the men. [72] Yet many women did choose to paint, sculpt or draw professionally as the mid-century progressed - many needed to do so, if a professional is one who seeks to earn a living from the work and not rather to gain pleasure from it (though the two need not be seen as mutually exclusive). There were more than a few women who meant to operate commercially, not just pleasurably; publicly, not just privately. This question will be reverted to, but it is important at this point to take note of how the amateur was defined in the period.

This comment on the work of Eleanor Vere Boyle (EVB) made in the <u>Spectator</u> in 1853, gives some clue as to the distinction between an amateur and a professional:

> "Art is a pleasure to her as well as a study; and this alone would separate her widely and for ever from the crowd of artists for whom designing is a profession, and from amateurs who rate it as an accomplishment." 73

The point is expanded by this observation on the work of Ruskin, exhibited at a charity exhibition in 1863, amidst professional and amateur work:

> "Mr. Ruskin stands on the debateable ground between artist and amateur. As not following the art for money, he belongs to the latter category; as following it with the entire

> devotion of an earnest mind, he is, above most men of his time, an artist." 74

These statements immediately encourage the reader to expect from the amateur something which is equivalent to an art for art's sake, and yet is also less accomplished than the work which someone producing for remuneration put forward. Critical expression throughout the period reflected, not only an acceptance of this distinction, but a conviction that it was a very important one to maintain. To take the latter point first, this is the opening passage of the Spectator's critic's reaction to Clayton's English Female Artists:

> "The first effect produced by this book is to raise in our minds the questions, - What constitutes an artist, and where are we to draw the line, especially in the case of women, between an artist and an amateur? The rough-and-ready money test, though the most obvious, is, after all, the least reliable for the veriest dauber may sell his or her paintings, when a true artist may never gain a penny from the discerning public. But if all the fine ladies who have ever dabbled in oil painting, in conjunction with fancy work and paper flowers, are to go down to posterity as Female Artists, we shall be more puzzled than ever to discover the right application of the word!" 75

The Amateur Exhibitions provoked comment which shows what the label connoted, and indicates women's expected position in such a company:

> "The collection on the whole is a creditable one; not offering, as was not to be expected, any great daring in choice of subject or originality in method, but showing in many cases a cultivated sense of beauty, and adequate power in its expression. There are not many works of a decidedly inferior character. The ladies are generally among the best contributors, as, indeed, they will be found to be in most collections of the kind - copies of pictures, flower-painting, etc. - in all the minor branches and amid the minor votaries of art." (Spectator, 1851) 76

This was the second Amateur Exhibition in London, and was followed by others, and this was generally seen as a healthy and interesting addition to the round of shows which presented art to the public. The Athenaeum's critic, reviewing the third show (1852), offered a hint that the amateur was at this time coming out of his/her shell - in the case of its being her shell, the results were to be of concern to the Victorian art world throughout the remainder of the century:

> "It has ere now occurred to many of our readers that the word 'amateur', so long serving as a mere cloak of shelter for the feeble productions of vanity more desirous of praise than of honest labour - shows signs of changing its signification as far as some of the Fine Arts are concerned. Strange tales, no doubt, might still be told of failures made by gentlemen who will build their own houses; but in other arts amateur 'developement' (sic) proceeds triumphantly. In Drama, dilettantes are now-a-days nearly as much talked about as the regular practitioners, - in Music, we have gentlemen and ladies not merely aspiring to the glories of personal exhibition, but willing to grapple with science in order that they may come to a true expression of their thoughts, - while, to come to our point, Pall Mall East affords satisfactory evidence that in painting and drawing the travelling and domestic sons and daughters of England have made a great advance beyond frivolous pretence towards honest, praiseworthy reality... On the whole, promise and satisfaction of the best kind are to be found in this show: which - without degrading it to the style of silly drawing room rapture, or proclaiming it in any branch of Art perfect - deserves the cordial sympathy and hopeful approval of the artist and of the lover of art." 77

Although this writer does not particularise women as amateurs, others responding to these Exhibitions did: the Times in 1851 would put them even lower if it could:

> "It is to be hoped that our amateurs will

> raise something like a spirit of emulation among those young ladies who think the summit of excellence is attained when they have mastered (sic) the singularly useless art of copying an engraving in chalk and pencil..." 78

Amateur exhibitions invariably held more female work than male (see below, Chapter 3), and there was, indeed, a notion that amateurism was fundamentally more in keeping with being female than with being male. Martin Hardie has described this feeling well in Watercolour Painting in Britain (1968):

> "After 1850, people changed and conditions altered. Women had just as much leisure, and watercolour painting before marriage and between confinements became recognised as one of their especial occupations. Men, however, turned aside from such trivialities. More manly pursuits were encouraged at the public schools. Grown men found dabbling with colours on a piece of paper incompatible with a sense of their own dignity. Leisure could be better spent on sport or courtship, on the reading of newspapers and scientific journals, on experimental science itself, on travel, billiards, literary compositions, and, most important of all, in serious converse away from the ladies." 79

The sense is given very clearly here that art as a hobby was appropriate for women, but unsuitable for men: this led to the assumption that art produced by women was necessarily amateur, that it was of the character that Eliot describes so caustically in Middlemarch:

> "Dorothea, whose slight regard for domestic music and feminine fine art must be forgiven her, considering the small tinkling and smearing in which they chiefly consisted at that dark period..."
> "Rosamund, though she would never do anything that was disagreeable to her, was industrious; and now more than ever she was active in sketching her landscapes and market-carts and portraits of friends, in practising her music, and in being from morning till night her own standard of a perfect lady...." 80

However, as has already been said, many women in the period either chose or were obliged to see their art as a profession, not as a hobby, despite the conventions, and found their polite accomplishment having to come into its own, as well as it could, as a means of livelihood: practising, not so much like Eliot's Rosamund, but rather like Bronte's Mrs. Huntingdon, the tenant of Wildfell Hall, who supports her son and herself by her landscape painting.[81] As Lee Holcombe, in her useful book Victorian Ladies at Work (1973) writes:

> "According to generally accepted middle-class views, or rather, views generally accepted in the middle classes, marriage and motherhood were the careers marked out for women by nature, and their own homes furnished the fullest scope for women's abilities. Not for them the workaday world outside." [82]

So, when economic necessity - a deceased or truanting husband, continued spinsterhood, dependent parents and offspring - demanded breadwinning activity from a middle-class woman (women in the lower classes had, of course, always worked for the family's livelihood), it was to an occupation that she had legitimately enjoyed in the home as a genteel and decorous pastime that she looked for her means of earning, rather than turning to work of a nature unbecoming to a lady.[83] Thus, it was often through a 'make do and mend' attitude that a woman might wish to be a professional artist. Exceptionably, there is an awareness of this circumstance quite precisely indicated in a review of the Society of Female Artists' exhibition of 1861, in the Spectator; this review also makes plain that it seemed, at the same time as it was dangerous for the continuing welfare of Art, quite laudable from an economic point of view, that women should look on painting, etc. as a lucrative occupation - a view that, with its attendant confusion, evident here, became generally echoed in critical writing in the early '60's:

> "It would be ungracious to say anything in disparagement of the very laudable efforts

> of this society to encourage the development of an occupation for women, which would raise them in every respect above the necessity of leaning too much upon the customary support from the stronger sex; it would be equally ungallant not to praise as highly as conscience will bear, the few pictures which have any real pretensions to be works of art. At the same time we must consider that the artists themselves wish to be esteemed from an art point of view - that they enter the lists to be compared with men, certainly without favour if not without affection. We imagine, also, it would be very unsatisfactory on every side, if the critic were to balance his favours in proportion as he was aware that this or that picture were the work by which a young family or an invalid husband were supported. Such an estimate would be charitable, perhaps, but it would be narrow-minded, and certainly not calculated to aid the cause of art-study amongst women as an ennobling pursuit, and a fair path for their best aspirations." 84

There were other women, though, who, on the tide of public opinion and in the face of the 'redundancy' of women in the 1850's, [85] claimed professional status on principle, as a statement about the substantiality and consequence which their art had for them and which they wanted others to see it as having.

Cases in point include that of Anna Blunden, described by Virginia Surtees as "a young, ambitious woman, impecunious" and "with apparently little choice other than that of earning a precarious living as a governess." [86] She sought the assistance of Ruskin: she sought spiritual and he gave practical help: "... send me the things you want to sell, and I'll give you something to do for me when I have it"... "if you will send me any drawings you want disposed of, I will try to do so." [87] (Indeed, the effect that the assumed amateurism of women artists had on their attempts to gain patronage is not to be overlooked, and will enter into the examination of patronage in Chapter 4.)

Harriet Ludlow Clarke was another woman who saw her art as a

professional activity, not as a hobby: she gained notice for her stained glass work and wood engraving; the Dictionary of National Biography says that, "having a turn for art, and wishing to earn an independent living, she adopted about 1837 the practice, unusual for a woman, of engraving on wood." [88] (This serves as a reminder that, within the arts, some forms were much more amenable as commercially viable activities than others, and their artistic status correspondingly various: this matter arises in Chapter 2, where education for women in the arts is examined).

Of Anna Maria Fitz-James, Clayton reports, "from unforeseen circumstances, it became necessary that Miss Fitz-James should commence teaching, (and) she was placed for some months with Mr. Valentine Bartholomew the eminent flower painter." [89] The said Mr. Bartholomew's wife, Anne Bartholomew née Fayermann, painted commercially, devoting her talent to jewellery miniatures and flower pieces. Clayton records another, slightly earlier, example:

> "Very early in life, Fanny (Corbaux) displayed a marked love for drawing. When she was but fifteen, the childish fancy was suddenly turned into a matter of stern necessity. Her father lost a considerable competence, and became enfeebled both in body and mind. The young girl bravely faced the difficulties of an arduous profession, and set to work in right earnest." 90

Margaret Gillies' situation was the same: reverses in family fortunes led to her taking up art professionally, as the Dictionary of National Biography notes: "she determined to earn for herself an honourable livlihood, and ... took the somewhat bold step of becoming a professional artist." [91] Yet again, Mary Harrison, the flower painter from Liverpool, was obliged to be a professional artist, having "a large family of children for whom, through the invalided condition of their father, she was compelled to provide." 92 One of the later generation of women active in the mid-century, who, benefiting from the change in opinion on the 'woman question', could see the impositions that were placed on women artists by

convention, exclaimed in her autobiography: "How my relations in England would have stared, and thought me little less than mad, to entertain the idea of becoming a professional - I, a married woman!" [93] (The speaker, Louise Jopling, had removed to France at this point in her life.)

As has been pointed out, in the face of the changing facts of the situation, it could no longer be assumed that women's art _was_ amateur (though some quarters of opinion would always believe it to be so and, more, believed that it should be so) and feminist writing proclaimed this: Caroline Dall, an American author of a book called _Woman's Right to Labour_, published in 1859, was quoted in the _Athenaeum_ the following year:

> "The _amateur_ element has hitherto pervaded women's attempts to labour. They have not been _thoroughly_ taught and trained to any trade or business; and, until they _are_ so trained and taught, their work will not be worth wages adequate to the labour it has cost them. Good work, of whatever kind, will always command good pay. The present generation of women are beginning to feel this, and _to desire to learn thoroughly_ whatever form of industry they adopt." [94]

The less radical voices, however, took much longer to formulate statements which recognised the possibility that a woman could be _any_ sort of artist, just as a man could, given the encouragement and resources, and it is not until the end of the period under discussion here that the following article becomes typical in its contemplation of women artists as professionals:

> "Before deciding on an artistic career, a woman should be sure of her capacities and of the nature of her position with regard to art - whether it be that of genius, talent or aptitude, inasmuch as the functions of each are distinct. If when she leaves the art school she is irresistibly impelled to continue the pursuit, if she originates subjects which have a touch of soul in them, if she can throw

the inner meaning of nature into a landscape or a pure sentiment into a face, - then we may be sure that she has a touch of genius. She is one of the few to whom art in its highest forms will be revealed, and she may, and must, devote her life to its quest. She will idealize and beautify everyday life, and become a teacher and priestess of nature. The instinctive perceptions of woman are often more subtle and finer than those of men; and her heart will guide her to the interpretation of delicacies of sentiment which pass unrecognised by his stronger genius. If a girl be only endowed with a correct eye and clever hand, if she can do no more than readily adapt forms to their uses and give a certain intellectual value to composition, she may be said to have talent, and may be a worker in a lower sphere. To her the many branches of a decorative art are open. She may copy or paint tapestries and panels, design chintzes, and so forth. But she must not waste her time in painting second-rate pictures..." (Magazine of Art, 1884). 95

The path leading to such an expression as this, still as drenched in notions of Woman and womanliness as it is, is the long and complex path which this thesis charts. It was founded on a few historical examples of women who seemed to have been 'proper' artists, whose names crop up in discussion in the period: Angelika Kauffman, Mary Moser, Mary Beale, Anne Damer and Elisabetta Sirani were recalled by critics, commentators and women themselves, but even so, were used to a very limited degree to promote the interests of mid-Victorian women artists:

> "A recurring pattern in early writing about women artists is a pronounced lack of discussion about the actual work they produced. Instead we hear of their beauty, charm, morals, or the lack of them, of their ability as musicians, housekeepers, and conversationalists - attributes that many of us will recognise as survival skills." 96

Those skills,could not, however, outmanoeuvre the octopus of mid-

Victorian convention: if the female artist's social situation presented her with psychological oppression (in the family connection that saw her as an appendage to her male relatives and in the slough of amateurism in which she had either to flounder or thrash about), it presented her with practical oppression in the form of domestic business.

Clayton writes of Agnes Bouvier:

> "For a long time, Miss Bouvier's painting was only a recreation, taken up at intervals snatched from domestic duties... The long illness of her father and mother.. painfully occupied a great part of her time; and with such cares upon her, it is not wonderful if at this period her name appeared only occasionally in the catalogues of art exhibitions.";

and of Catherine Edwards, later Sparkes: "She ceased to work at the Royal Academy in 1868, when she married"; and of Eleanor Fairlam Brown:

> "Attending to her invalid husband added greatly to her labours, so... she quite gave up sending to exhibitions... Not being able to travel, in consequence of her husband's illness, and charmed with the scenery of Holmwood, Surrey, Mrs. Brown went there with her family to reside, and has been much occupied with painting the views around.";

and of Emma Cooper: "During eight years after her marriage, Mrs. Cooper had little time or occasion for studying painting.."; and of Emma Walter:

> "... as her sister married early, and she was then the only daughter at home, far too precious to her father to be allowed out of his sight for many hours together, her opportunities for open-air study were limited." 97

While Anna Mary Howitt gave up painting for exhibition on her marriage to Alaric Watts in 1859, after very successful public appearances in the '50's [98]; Mary Severn gave up painting on her marriage to Charles Newton in 1861 to copy his archaeological discoveries, (fig.20); Florence Claxton stopped exhibiting at the Academy when in 1868 she became Mrs. Farrington, continuing her work only in less conspicuous areas like the Society of Female Artists. That marriage was, in fact, expected to put an end to any woman's activity which took her beyond the domestic boundary, is implied quite concisely but clearly in the Art Journal's obituary notice of the painter Anna Charretie (née Kenwell) when it says: "She was married, in the year 1841, to Captain John Charretie, formerly of the Hon. East India Company's service, but continued her study of Art." [99] The conflict involved in women trying to be artists as well as 'proper' women led sculptor Harriet Hosmer - who, though not British, was an example to British women artists of the period - to declare:

> "an artist has no business to marry. For a man, it may be well enough, but for a woman, on whom matrimonial duties and cares weigh more heavily, it is a moral wrong, I think, for she must either neglect her profession or her family, becoming neither a good wife nor a good artist. My ambition is to become the latter, so I wage eternal feud with the consolidating knot." 100

She knew well the burden of family life: Fanny Kemble, writing to Frederick Leighton in 1862, reported:

> "I saw Hetty Hosmer three days after her arrival in Boston. Her father is a hopeless invlaid, and she will certainly not leave him while he lives; but I suspect that he is likely to die before this year ends, and then she will return to live in Italy..."
> "Just before leaving Boston I saw Hetty Hosmer. She has come home to her poor old paralytic father, who, I suppose, is not likely to live very long. Whenever the event of his death happens, Hetty will gather up her substance, and depart hence for the rest

> of her natural or artistic life." 101
> (She worked in Rome with the English
> sculptor John Gibson).

Hosmer's deliberate singleness can be suspected in the case of other women who enjoyed long successful careers as painters: Emily Mary Osborn was artistically active for over fifty years, and remained unmarried; the sisters Martha Mutrie and Annie Mutrie never married, and could claim 25 and 30 exhibiting years respectively to their credit. Other women of the period who did marry (and, unless feminists, almost inevitably became mothers) have expressed their realisation of the deleterious or, at least, debilitating effect which the circumstance had on their careers: Henrietta Ward reflected on her early works:

> "So far, as may be seen, I had not specialised - at least not to any great extent - in historical painting, confining myself instead to domestic subjects, which was surely natural, as all my leisure moments were of necessity spent in looking after my children." 102

She recalled the advice of a friend's mother whereby "I was very wrong not to make my child's clothes and give all my time to domestic matters, and... if I did my duty to my husband and home there would be no time left to paint." [103] Louise Jopling was driven, with two children and a wandering husband, to remark that "Only abroad can a working and domestic life be carried on simultaneously with little effort." [104] A woman's enforced domesticity, as Ward indicated, had certain consequences for her subject matter: this will be discussed at length in Chapter 5. It contributed heavily to the stereotype of a woman's picture or 'female art.'

Despite the obstacles to becoming and remaining an artist which have been discussed here as peculiar to women, the number of women active in the fields of painting, sculpture and illustration did, as has been implied, increase conspicuously during the mid-century, and the female artist emerged as an existent and recognisable figure. She was much slower to become visible than

the female writer: these words from an Athenaeum reviewer on Caroline Norton's and Margaret Fuller's publications of the mid-fifties could not be applied to women painters for quite a few years:

> "Women now have taken to themselves words, and speak up for themselves with a witness! Novels, plays, poetry, serious composition, all prove that women can not only assert themselves, but that they have obtained a hearing." 105

This relatively slow establishment of the female artist was regretted by Harriet Martineau in an article called "Female Industry" in the Edinburgh Review in 1859:

> "There remain the classes which speak so well for themselves as to leave others little to say; - artists and authors. Here nature indicates the path of action; and all that we are practically concerned with is that her behests are not disobeyed, - her guidance not perverted, - her elect not oppressed, through our mismanagement. A Jenny Lind cannot be stopped in her singing, nor a Siddons in her dramatic career, nor a Currer Bell in her authorship, by any opposition of fortune: but none of us can tell how many women of less force and lower genius may have been kept useless and rendered unhappy, to our misfortune as much as their own... The artists have an unlimited field before them; and the annual exhibition of the works of female artists prove the disposition to occupy it... the female artists can take very good care of themselves. Music will be listened to, if it is good; and sculpture and painting must assert their own merits..." 106

And they did: at the start of the period under discussion here, women's participation in art was fit only to be mentioned in passing, but as the '50's became the '60's, the tide changed in a way that demanded recognition. George Eliot reported in 1859, after visiting the summer exhibitions: "David Roberts was in the gallery at the time, and I heard him say, 'If ever one sees a fine

picture now, it is by a woman'." [107] while the 1862 Academy show elicited the following effusion from the Critic's reviewer:

> "There will be one feature in the Exhibition which will raise the enthusiastic admiration of foreigners for Englishwomen to a higher pitch than ever - that is, in the pictures by English ladies who have made art their profession. At least four pictures we can speak of (fig. 21 et al) that will, at any rate, do a good deal to annihilate the dogma that no woman ever made an impression on the world of art or religion... This is as we might anticipate from an age which is... the most aspiring in the history of womanhood." 108

The expressions of this growth that reached the press or the publisher form an interesting chart of the progress which women artists made during the period, and to complete the overview of the period which this chapter has attempted, a sequence of such writing will now be considered. The first book that put forward the 'woman (artist) question' as worthy of detailed discussion, in this country, was the American Elisabeth Ellet's Women Artists in all Ages and Countries, appearing here in 1859. [109] This will be considered as a forerunner of much more later discussion of the topic, including two interesting articles - not in major periodicals, but very rich in their debate of the question - from 1864 and 1870, and the invaluable Ellen Clayton's English Female Artists, of 1876.

The following review of Ellet's book suggests that she has been one of the first to jump on a new bandwagon: the somewhat tart tone is that of an Athenaeum reviewer:

> "Let a subject seem popular, and immediately we have the universal book about it. A dagger-stroke is aimed at a kind; forthwith, assassins of all ages and countries are recorded in a facile epitome. The Big Ship goes down to the sea; at once our compiler is at the Ark on Ararat. A youthful prodigy appears; in a twinkling every marvellous boy and girl, from the earliest period to the present time, is

> cited to figure in a timely volume. Nothing is easier, or, in general, more unsatisfactory than this summarising, significant of a few visits to the public library, the ransacking of one or more bibliographies, with a vague account of raw reading and discursive transcript. Mrs. Ellet, in floating down the current which has set in from the intellect-of-women point of view, and in joining those who appear readier to talk than to act, is purely and simply a collector and assorter of rough materials." 110

The author states in her preface that, aside from Professor Ernst Guhl's Die Frauen in die Kunstgescichte, which, she says is the only work that has ever been published on the subject,:

> "Authorities, too numerous to mention, in French, Italian, German, and English, have been carefully consulted; particularly the works of Vasari, Descampes, and Fiorillo. The sketches of many living artists were prepared from materials furnished by themselves or their friends."

The stated aims of the author should be considered in assessing the significance, as well as the achievement, of the book,however:

> "It is manifestly impossible, in a work of this kind, to include even the names of all the women artists who are worthy of remembrance. Among those of the present day are many, who have not yet had sufficient experience to do justice to their own powers, and any criticism of their productions would be premature and unfair...No attempt has been made to give elaborate critiques, or a connected history of art. The aim has been simply to show what woman has done, with the general conditions favourable or unfavourable to her efforts, and to give such impressions of the character of each distinguished artist as may be derived from a faithful record of her personal experiences."

The book's index listed 565 names, and presented the reader with one chapter on eras previous to the 15th century, two on the 16th century, five on the 17th century, six on the 18th century, and five on the 19th century. The 19th century claimed the most

space of all the periods treated, however, and the longest discussion of a single artist was devoted to the author's contemporary and compatriot, Harriet Hosmer (Angleika Kauffmann ran a close second). This panoramic approach drew criticism on two counts: The Englishwoman's Review saw the book as partial (as opposed to impartial):

> "A long chapter is devoted to the women artists of America. We blush to think that so much talent has been unacknowledged by us; for our transatlantic sisters must indeed be astonished at our ignorance of them, if it in any degree equals their ignorance of us. They count by hundreds, while they reckon us by units, and are as indiscriminate in their admiration as partial in their selection." 111

The British contemporary artists whom Ellet mentioned were: Fanny Corbaux, Elizabeth Murray (née Heaphy), Mrs. Monckton Milnes, Louisa (sic) Rayner, Florence Caxton (sic), Jane Benham Hay, Barbara Leigh Smith (later Bodichon), Miss Mutrie (which sister is not clear), Anna Mary Howitt, and Margaret Carpenter. Though all these names will recur in these pages, this was not a methodical list correspondent to the fame or success enjoyed by individual artists at the time of writing.

The Athenaeum's critic thought the book partial (as opposed to complete): "The book is irregular, and often tedious: it is written in the style of flaccid facility inveterate among compilers; still, it may have its hour of welcome." [112] It obviously did, for Bentley brought out a second edition just the next year. It was the subject of the book which was popular, because Ellet's other compilations were not re-published here.[113] The information which the book offered was more in tune with the increasing interest in women artists in this country at the time, than some of the sentiments in which she clothes the same, yet her very equivocation as regards her political location on her subject is typical of the uncertainty engendered in many minds at this time by the increasing topicality of women artists. Thus,

she prefaces the book:

> "Should the perusal of my book inspire with courage and resolution any woman who aspires to overcome difficulties in the achievement of honourable independence, or should it lead to a higher general respect for the powers of women and their destined position in the realm of Art, my object will be accomplished."

Yet she writes on the second page:

> "Woman is the type of the ornamental part of our life, and lends to existence the charm which inspires the artist, and furnishes him (sic) with an object for his genius. Her native unconscious grace and beauty presents the models which it is his highest effort to copy faithfully.";

and, discussing the position of women in the middle of the 1800's:

> "At the present time, the prospect is fair of a reward for study and unfaltering application in woman as in man; her freedom (without regarding as such the so-called 'emancipation' which would urge her into a course against nature, and contrary to the gentleness and modesty of her sex) is greater, and the sphere of her activity is wider and more effective than it has ever been."

Perhaps the seriousness and usefulness of the book can, ultimately, be judged by the fact that it contained no illustration of the works of the subjects.[114] (The second edition carried a frontispiece of the portrait of Anne Damer). In this way, it contributed very little to breaking down that barrier of invisibility which women's work has been hidden behind, although it gave women artists a substantial push forward out of the shadows that, in our own day, have closed back in on them and made it so difficult to rediscover the mid-Victorian woman artist.

Five years later, however, the public and the art world had more hard evidence to go on: The Society of Art Quibblers took as the theme for one of their weekly meetings in July 1864 (July 9th) a paper by one Mr. Freezor of their membership, entitled "On Female Artists". [115] Much more radical sentiments were expressed therein:

> "Men who limit a woman's mission to the strict fulfillment of her duties as a wife and mother, appear to think she was merely formed to be the nurse, consoler, and submissive wife, ministering only to their own individual necessities and pleasures. Surely this is a very mean and selfish theory. The fulfillment of duties incidental to her sex ought not to shut out a woman from the exercise of her intellectual powers, or prove the grave in which to bury talents calculated to benefit and advance the race."

He thought that traditional notions of women's innate mental inferiority to men failed to satisfy the claim that women could be great artists: "Woman is generally allowed to be more imaginative than man, and imagination combined with refined feelings and delicate sentiments form the chief essentials of an artist's success." Citing Henrietta (sic) Browne, Elisabeth Jerichau, Henrietta Ward, Emily Osborn, Miss Mutrie (presumably the elder, Martha), and Rebecca Solomon, he asserted that "Eminent female painters are peculiar to our own times", showing a benevolent chauvinism to match Ellet's. He declared:

> "That a woman may fulfil her domestic and maternal duties and yet contrive to excel as an artist, has been fully demonstrated of late by the many ladies who, while most exemplary as wives and mothers, have yet attained the highest excellence as painters, musicians, and authors."

He went on to address himself to the hard facts behind the appearances, saying:

> "The success these ladies have achieved is the more surprising when we consider the many difficulties they must have encountered while pursuing their studies, not least of which is their exclusion from the schools of the Royal Academy."

and

> "The statistical returns show us that the female population is in excess of the male about half a million, and, therefore, also show us how many females must of necessity be debarred from matrimony, and consequently, how many must be dependent on their own efforts for the means of living."

He concluded with an appeal to his confrères to support and assist women artists:

> "When, therefore, they seek art as a profession, let us not withold our encouragement and help, but rather let them find their brothers in art, anxious to give their talents a fair field, and hold out good strong helping hands to aid their toilsome ascent over the rugged path to fame."

This debate was reported in The Art Student, and its reporter recounted that:

> "At the close of Mr. Freezor's address, which was warmly applauded, Mr. F.S. Potter thought that most of the members present would rather be inclined to advance still more evidence and still stronger arguments in favour of Mr. Freezor's views than to oppose or denounce them."

There followed, however, an interestingly varied response on the part of the collected Art Quibblers, the range of which reflected the 'state of play' on the 'woman (artist) question' in 1864. Potter went on to inveigh against the Royal Academy's exclusive policies (see below, Chapters 2 and 3 for a detailed discussion thereof), and was followed by Mr. F.G. Oakes in similar vein, who advanced that: "If tested by real merit ladies would frequently

win their way into the Academy to the exclusion of male students having less talent." After a third speaker on the same topic, the Chairman intervened with the reminder that the discussion was not so much concerned with Academy policy as with "the power and position of women as artists."

The arrière-garde now showed itself, firstly in the person of the Chairman, who asserted: "If the ladies had real artistic power, the mere fact of their exclusion from the Academy would not retard its development, and we should yet see it fully displayed." Mr. Benny, then, prompted no doubt by this breath of retardataire hot air, rose to say that, "although full of respect for the character of woman and warmly appreciative of her power and influence, he could not regard the sex as intellectually equal to the male sex"; his justification: "History would not permit him to do so." He went further, to assert that:

> "If women now excelled in art, and were the equals of our great men-painters, he thought this fact due rather to the degradation of art down to the reach of female excellence than the advancement of female excellence to the highest powers of art."

One Mr. Wall countered him thus:

> "Suppose the man at home entrusted with its humble duties, shut up in its peaceful circle, and in a purely dependent position, and the woman free and independent, but with the spur of necessity in her side, battling with might and main to attain that excellence in her trade, profession, or calling which was essential to the preservation of home and the pleasures and comforts of those she loved. Did not Mr. Benny think it exceedingly probable that under these circumstances men would be what women are now and women what men are now?"

There followed enthusiastic debate on the nature and effects of male and female education, wherein Mr. Potter pointed out that,

in history, "Learning was the peculiar privilege of men only", but Mr. Holyoke opined that "It was not desirable to give women the education we gave men, because such an education was neither fitted for their social position, nor for their intellectual powers." Mr. Evans concluded that, "although women might succeed in the humbler walks of art, they could not excel in its higher sphere", but the theretofore silent Mr. Foot suggested that "It was not fair to give the verdict before a trial had come on, and condemn women for not excelling in arts they had not yet been afforded a fair opportunity of studying."

The discussion moved on, inevitably, to the 'mission of women', and Messrs. Wall and Buckman held forth on the power, influence and importance of mothers - chiefly, it seems, of great men - and Wall concluded, rather negatively for women determined to be artists, that:

> "A practical knowledge of art, even if it leads to no great works by female hands, gives posterity no grand pictures or glorious statues, will give us an improved race of Englishmen..."

The Art Student's reporter then concluded: "The discussion was continued with unabated animation, but we have not space to report it at greater length." In the following issue of the paper, however, a letter appeared signed by 'A Female Artist', commenting on the report of the meeting.[116] She was at pains to bring the men's attention to "a crowd of female artists who lived and flourished in the past", whom, she felt, had been overlooked in the discussion; she named Sabina von Steinbach, Charlotte arch-duchess of Austria, Margaret van Eyck, Irene de Spilimberg, Properzia Rossi, Sofonisba Anguiscola, Elisabetta Sirani, Lavinia Fontana - all of whom had figured in Ellet's book of five years earlier. There had (of course!) been no women present at the Quibblers' meeting, to advance this or any other modifying observations.

By the end of the 1860's, women had become acknowledged participants of the British art world, with a number of particular names now familiar to any lay person who took a consistent literate interest in art - the subject of them had not, however, become stale, and in 1870, Art Pictorial and Industrial published a three-part article on "Female Artists and Art-Schools of England", which attempted an almost encyclopeadic coverage of its theme.[117] The writer was J. Cordy Jeaffreson, not a specialist either in art or in women, but someone who shows therefore how widely the subject of women artists now appealed as a serious and involved topic. He started his discussion by considering Kauffmann and Moser, the two original female Academicians, who were by this time generally spoken of in discussion as the harbingers of the race of female artists in Britain. Jeaffreson called Moser "the Miss Mutrie of a century since", and, claiming that there were "few persons who now-a-days give any thought to female artists of the last century", he considered at some length the circumstances in which such people had worked:

> "Ever again amongst women who made themselves famous in the European capitals after the revival of the decorative arts, the reader encounters a lady whose noble lineage indicates that her skill with the brush was no ancestral inheritance or result of paternal instruction, and as often forms the acquaintance of a matron whose meagre history refers her artistic culture to the influence of the religious house in which she spent the years of her girlhood; but of the comparatively few women-painters who contributed to the celebrity of the Flemish, Italian, or Spanish schools, the majority were children of the studio..."

He amplifies this familiar point:

> "Domestic restraints, stronger always upon girls than boys, have withheld from artistic enterprise many hundreds of women, who, had they been of the hardier and more adventurous sex, would have broken away from their rural home, and found in the studios of the capitals congenial occupations for their

> recognised faculties... The boy, who had learnt to love pictures and conceive an ambition to be a great producer of them, was in most cases so far master of his own movements that he could walk the round of the studios in the capital of his own native state, and seek employment in them."

Jeaffreson's discussion, in the first part of the article, was based primarily on the Royal Academy's history: he gives a table which records women's work appearing at the Academy from 1770 to 1793, but cautions that it should not

> "be imagined that the works of female artists thus exposed to public criticism were always of considerable merit... not a few of the works which swell the sums of the foregoing statement of women's artistic industry were produced by gentlewomen of quality or fashion, dabbling in the arts under the supervision of obsequious drawing-masters, or by children incapable of producing a sketch that would now-a-days win critical approval from anyone outside the artist's domestic circle."

By contrast, Martha Mutrie and Henrietta Ward provide "conclusive evidence that, instead of having retrograded, female art has greatly advanced." He considers the argument (which the Quibblers tackled) that women's artistic inferiority is proved by their absence from art history, arguing reasonably that:

> "Women's exclusion from the higher schools of learning, and the obvious inferiority of the education generally accorded to girls by social usage, may, it is conceived, be held in some degree accountable for the subordinate position, and humble merit of the fair sex in science and literature... That they have failed to demonstrate their natural equality with their masculine oppressors by work done in letters, or scientific investigation, may be explained by reference to the defectiveness of their preliminary training... it will probably never be fair to the gentler sex to place their intellectual achievements in severe contrast against those of men, and to estimate woman's mental value by the result of such a

> comparison, since in every probable state of society, marriage, and the maternal cares arising from marriage, will always be the chief business of the best of womankind, whose powers will consequently by withdrawn to a considerable degree from the highest fields of intellectual endeavour, on which the strongest and noblest of the male sex in future times, no less than now or in the past, will labour with undivided attention and all their forces."

For all his manifest sympathy with his subject, Jeaffreson's views were conservative, for 1870, in their acceptance of societal norms, and their well-intentioned confining of women's work to a separate category from men's. [118] The rest of the article was devoted to an examination of female art education, the author declaring:

> "I have courage and indiscreetness enough to suggest that women's position in art may have been less favourable than some of her less generous censors imagine. Is it clear that the studios and best art teachers have been no less accessible to her than her masculine competitors? that she has prosecuted artistic labour on terms of equality with workers of the sterner sex? ... when the most has been made of the liberality of the old masters towards female students, it cannot be maintained that the girls of past generations had the same facilities as young men for procuring artistic instruction."

He suggests that Ellert (sic) was inclined in her book to exaggerate the support which past women received from contemporary masters. He is particularly enthusiastic about the Female School of Art and the South Kensington School, contrasting the happy and industrious picture they represent (fig.22) with the continuing reluctance of the Academy to further the artistic chance of women. He mentions by name Fanny Corbaux, Sarah Setchel, Margaret Carpenter and Margaret Gillies and makes a vague reference to Louisa Starr, the first female winner of the

Academy Schools' gold medal - this is a selection of names which, in 1870, does not indicate an up-to-the-minute knowledge of what women are achieving in the arts, although all of these names are worthy of mention within the overall scheme of the subject.

Many more names were offered to the public's eye in Ellen Clayton's two volume book of six years later, English Female Artists. The author - billed as "the author of Queens of Song, etc." [119] - accounts for over 200 artists, ranging in time from Lavinia Teerlinck and Anne Carlisle operative in the 1600's to a host of living artists including herself. (She explains this disarming vanity thus: "There is always a certain personal interest attaching to the writer of a book; therefore a slight account of this otherwise insignificant designer may be acceptable to some readers.")

Volume one runs to 427 pages and volume two to 431, and they deal, respectively, with pre-1800 and the 19th century. The book as a whole is dedicated to Elizabeth Thompson, "in testimony of admiration for her genius", and other accredited inspirations included Ellet's work, and such chestnuts as Bryan's Dictionary of Painters, Chamber's Biographical Dictionary, the writings of Waagen, Jameson, Farington, Ottley and the Redgrave brothers. Of the history of her subject, Clayton writes, in characteristically romantic language:

> "Our native paintresses, as the old-fashioned art critics and compilers of biographical dictionaries quaintly term them, have left but faintly impressed footprints on the sands of time. They do not glitter in the splendour of renown, like their sisters of the pen or of the buskin. It is a difficult task to obtain a sparse list of their original works, or glean any scattered remarks on their most valued copies of great masters. Even the most romantic or admired of these fair dreamers on canvas or ivory have scarce an incident beyond the commonplace in the brief record of their public or private career."

Modern scholars would agree with her, yet her living subjects are not, in general, better presented than those whom death had deprived her of access to: all her subjects are clothed in sentiment. The Art Journal's reviewer remarked on this point:

> "Strange as it certainly is, we learn from these volumes far more, as a rule, of the lives of those who died half a century, and even more ago, than of those who are yet with us... there are many ladies whose names she gives of whom much more might well have been said, and some of whom more is said than seems necessary." 120

Indeed, the length of the entry Clayton makes for any artist seems to depend less on merit than on availability of material. Thus, Anna Blunden has 30 pages dedicated to her in the second volume, much of which consists of extracts from her diary of Continental travel; EVB is the subject of 25 pages, many of which are filled with letters and anecdotes to and of her by other, more famous people. By contrast, the dedicatee of the book, Elizabeth Thompson, is compressed into 4 pages, and Henrietta Ward - at this time the most established woman artist in the country still active - only 5. The way Clayton structured her material was to devote, in the first volume, chapters to individuals or groups of individuals and, in the second volume, to discuss artists in terms of genre. Thus, there is a chapter on Figure Painters, on Landscape Painters, on Humorous Designers, Decorative Artists, etc. Some artists are mentioned in more than one chapter, such as Adelaide Claxton (Figure Painters and Humorous Designers). Within the genres dealt with by volume two, the distribution is as follows: Figure Painters 34; Landscape Painters 18; Portrait, Miniature and Enamel Painters 8; Painters of Flowers, Fruit and Still-Life 18; Animal Painters 6; Humorous Designers 4; Decorative Artists 2; Amateurs 14. The size of this last category reflects, not so much the preponderance of non-professionals in the field of women's work, but rather the author's fascination with the wealthy and

aristocratic, a snobbery which frequently distorts her accounts.

As a work of critical analysis and historical value, Clayton's work suffered from the same defects as had Ellet's nearly twenty years earlier: no illustration, little analysis of works, and a marked unevenness in the nature of the information given, characterised by a greater interest in the subject's biography than in her productions. The Art Journal's reviewer summed it up, by saying: "Without any attempt at art-criticism, Miss Clayton tells the stories, long or brief as they may happen to be, of our Art sisters very pleasantly and very creditably both to them and to herself." [121] Despite the drawbacks of the author's approach, however, this remains the modern scholar's major source, and will recur in this thesis as a reference more than any other work; for, simply by naming so many names, it helps to make visible those figures hidden from history by the complex of circumstances discussed here: this survey will put faces and works to the names in a way that Clayton failed to do.

The Englishwoman's Review, in its report on Clayton's book, said "our first feeling was one of astonishment at the number of women who had obtained eminence in various branches of the art..."; [122] the Review was, of course, glad to be thus surprised, but the rise of women in the arts, and in other spheres, was greeted with other reactions by other quarters of opinion. The 'woman question', in all its ramifications, bothered extremely, for instance, the Saturday Review: thus a writer in this doggedly conservative weekly, lamenting in 1870:

> "... we used to think we knew to a shade what was womanly and what was unwomanly - where, for instance, the nobleness of dignity ended and the hardness of self-assertion began; while no-one could mistake the heroic sacrifice of self for the indifference to pain and the grossness belonging to a coarse nature, which last is as essentially unwomanly as the first is one of the finest manifestations of true womanliness. But if this exactness of interpretation belonged to past times, the

> utmost confusion prevails at present; and one of the points on which society is now at issue in all directions is just this very question - what is essentially unwomanly? and what are the only rightful functions of true womanliness? Men and tradition say one thing, certain women say another thing; and if what these women say is to become the rule, society will have to be reconstructed altogether, and a new order of human life must begin." 123

Women's appearance as artists was part of that 'new order': the Spectator had reported (with impatience) in 1860: "We have lady travellers, lady artists, lady critics, lady professors, lady preachers, lady lawyers, and lady writers..." [124] and, though the sympathy with which such figures were envisaged varied tremendously, as the above discussion has already indicated, they were envisaged, increasingly as the mid-century proceeded. Baldwin's type gave way to more positive images, to presentations of the earnest woman artist, (fig.23), the serious female student of art, (fig.24), the winner of artistic laurels, (fig.25), and though the type of simpering and decorative observer of art lingered in some minds, even she did not go unaffected by the emergence of women as executive participants in the art world, (figs. 26 + 27). At the end of the mid-century period, the woman artist had even become visible as a heroic (fig.28) and militant adherent of art, (fig.29). These images and the reality they reflect were only made possible by the events of the period 1850 to 1879, which will be detailed in the following chapters.

NOTES

1. Respectively, Nochlin and Harris, New York, 1977; Greer, London, 1979; Callen, London, 1979; Yeldham Campbell's research is an unpublished PhD for the Courtauld Institute, Cherry's a soon to be published book for the Women's Press, London - both survey the whole Victorian era, the former taking on Continental artists too. Widely available and popular accounts of the period give women a very slight mention: Jeremy Maas, Victorian Painters, London, 1969; Quentin Bell, Victorian Artists, London, 1967; William Gaunt, The Restless Century, London, 1972; Graham Reynolds, Painters of the Victorian Scene, London, 1953 (see below, ch.5, n.183).

2. For discussion of these statistics, see "The Industrial Movement", Jessie Boucherett, The Woman Question in Europe, ed. T. Stanton, London, 1884 and "Curiosities of the Census" (part 6), Charles Mackeson, The Leisure Hour, August 1874, p.541.

3. In this year, too, was set up the Englishwoman's Review, which was to be a monitor of the progress that women's emancipation, in all its forms, made: it declared that it would "restore woman to her true position, and render her the justice she deserves... it shall ever be our mission to chronicle the names of those women who distinguish themselves, whether in music, poetry, and the fine arts, or, better still, by their noble deeds." (April 21, 1858, p.569). The Review was short-lived, however (March 1857-September 1859), but was emulated by the Englishwoman's Journal (1858-1864) and revived in spirit in a new Englishwoman's Review (of social and industrial questions), which set up in October 1866, to run until July 1910. All three of these periodicals will appear as sources here.

4. Historians - not usually art historians - use differing divisions: David Thomson (England in the 19th Century, London, 1950) uses periods of 1815-50, 1851-74, 1875-1914; W. L. Burn (Age of Equipoise, London, 1964) considers the mid-century to be 1852-67; Halévy's celebrated History of the English People (vol.4, London, 1962) divided the period 1830-41, 1841-52, 1852-95; Anthony Wood (Nineteenth Century Britain, London, 1960) prefers 1822-50, 1851-68, 1869-1901.

5. Mrs. Anna Jameson, Sisters of Charity and the Communion of Labour, London, 1859, p.xv; the preface, from which this passage comes, was written for this edition. "Among the first names in the small list of illustrious women who have done real work in connection with painting and sculpture, Mrs. Jameson is rightly placed" (Spectator, November 23, 1878, p.1470). For an account of Jameson's life and work, see Clara Thomas, Love and Work Enough, London, 1967.

6. For an excellent survey of the changes affecting women's lives throughout this period, see Patricia Hollis, Women In Public, London, 1979, and also Martha Vicinus, ed., A Widening Sphere, Indiana, 1977. For an account of Millicent Garrett's life, see R. Strachey, Millicent Garrett Fawcett,

London, 1931; and for the same of Leigh Smith Bodichon, see H. Burton, Barbara Bodichon, London, 1949.

7. Mrs. Strutt, The Feminine Soul, London, 1857, quoted in Englishwoman's Review, March 21, 1857, p.2; the book as a whole is not as 'strong-minded' as this passage suggests!

8. "Man and Woman", Athenaeum, July 31, 1858, p.139.

9. "Man in a Club Window", The Habits of Good Society, London, 1859, p.230.

10. Ward Lock's anonymous book, running to 227 octave pages, also included sections on Bead Work, Bead and Bugle Work, Calisthenic Exercises, Etiquette, Politeness and Good Breeding, Feather Flowers, Flower Painting, Gilding and Bronzing Plaster Casts, Illuminated or Vellum Painting, Imitation Carved Ivory, Oil Painting, Ornaments in Rice Shell-Work, Painting on Velvet, Painting on Wood, Pictures of Birds made with their natural Feathers, the Toilette, Transparent Glass Painting, Waxen Fruit and Flowers, and Weaving or Plaiting Hair Ornaments.

11. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.70.

12. Philip Hamerton, Thoughts about Art, London, 1862, p.349. The 'unfeminine' could take a variety of forms: see below, ch.5, for more of Hamerton's views on what was considered unfeminine, and also the above-mentioned Elegant Arts for Ladies (note 8): "Many ladies are prejudiced against painting in oils; they think it difficult, dirty and unhealthy...", p.86.

13. Carol Bauer and Lawrence Ritt, Free and Ennobled, Oxford, 1979, p.1. This provides a varied and very useful selection of written evidences of the developments regarding the image of woman in the period.

14. The Leisure Hour, December, 1856, no.260, p.816; what a man should be alphabetically was: "Affectionate, Bold, Candid, Daring, Enterprising, Faithful, Grateful, Honourable, Indefatigable, Just, Kind, Loving, Moral, Noble, Obliging, Polite, Quick, Religious, Social, Truthful, Upright, Valiant, Watchful, 'Xemplary, Zealous."

15. "Womanliness", Saturday Review, August 6, 1870, p.166; though the Saturday Review was conspicuous among periodicals for its defence of the stereotypical woman, such views as are here expressed were not, of course, rare or unusual in the period. The author here is Eliza Lynn Linton, notorious in her own time for her opposition to the 'new woman' in all her forms: see H. van Thal, Eliza Lynn Linton, London, 1979.

16. Barbara Leigh Smith, Women and Work, London, 1857, p.18.

17. Respectively, Fine Arts Quarterly, October, 1864, p.47; Art Journal, May 1, 1861, p.159; Illustrated London News, July 16, 1864, p.55.

18. Though she appears as a minor character or a footnote in some surveys of Preraphaelitism, and in accounts of the life and career of George Eliot and William Allingham - literary rather than painterly studies - she has only recently claimed any place in an artistic context, in John Crabbe's "An Artist Divided", Apollo, May 1981, vol.113, p.311.

19. Eleanor Tufts, Our Hidden Heritage, New York, 1974, p.xv; female chroniclers of art, of the Victorian period, were, interestingly, similarly blind to the claims of women artists for attention, by and large. An exception might, however, be Sarah Tytler, whose Modern Painters and their Paintings, London, 1874, noticed a handful of women painters of the mid-Victorian period, which her consoeurs Jameson, Lady Eastlake, Mrs. Charles Heaton, and others, failed to do.

20. John Ruskin to Sophia Sinnett, 1858, quoted in Cook and Wedderburn, The Life, Letters and Complete Works, London, 1903 etc., vol.14, p.308, n.2.

21. ibid, vol.14, p.308 ('Academy Notes').

22. ibid, vol.33, p.280.

23. Notorious among students of the Victorian woman, after Kate Millet's feminist analysis of the two 1864 lectures, "Of King's Treasuries" and "Of Queen's Gardens" which make up Sesame and Lilies, in Sexual Politics, London, 1971; for Ruskin's correspondence with two women artists, Anna Blunden and Louisa, Lady Waterford, see Virginia Surtees, Sublime and Instructive, London, 1972, and vols.36 & 37 of Cook and Wedderburn, op. cit., for his correspondence with sundry others, including Jemima Blackburn/Wedderburn.

24. "Women's Rights, the new starting point", Spectator, March 8, 1856, p.271; see also Strutt, op.cit., p.78ff, for discussion of the nature of female capabilities.

25. See George Romanes, "Mental Differences between Men and Women", Nineteenth Century, vol.21, 1887, p.654ff, for an instance of this frequently aired point.

26. Athenaeum, January 20, 1866, p.99.

27. Spectator, February 16, 1861, p.165

28. Illustrated London News, June 6, 1857, p.545.

29. Athenaeum, February 9, 1861, p.200; Spectator, June 6, 1857, p.594.

30. "Rosa Bonheur", Spectator, January 17, 1857, p.71; her name became a standard indication of female artistic achievement, such that her name became used as a standard of excellence; thus, Barbara Bodichon was called 'the Rosa Bonheur of landscape' and Martha Mutrie was, in 1858, "becoming quite the Rosa Bonheur of azaleas" (Athenaeum, May 8, 1858, p.597).

31. Victoria Magazine, July 1866, p.246.

32. "The Future of Englishwomen", Nineteenth Century, June, 1878, p.1028; the writer was the former Alexandra Leighton, 1828/1905, distinguished chiefly for her Life & Letters of Robert Browning, pul

1891. For a reply to this article, see Millicent Garrett Fawcett, "The Future of Englishwomen", Nineteenth Century, August, 1878, p.349.

33. Spectator, April 4, 1858, p.379.

34. Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, London, 1953, introduction. Writers did, in fact, often use the phrase 'the other sex' to indicate women or men, depending on which gender was their principal subject.

35. Respectively, Athenaeum, May 8, 1858, p.596; Athenaeum, May 5, 1866, p.603; Illustrated London News, May 9, 1863, p.518; Illustrated London News, May 7, 1864, p.455; for more information on Ward, see below, ch.6.

36. Respectively, Art Journal, April 1, 1870; p.98; Athenaeum, February 13, 1869, p.247; Art Journal, June 1, 1855, p.175.

37. Illustrated London News, May 25, 1861, p.497.

38. ibid, May 28, 1870, p.562.

39. Art Journal, June 1, 1870, p.168.

40. Saturday Review, May 25, 1861, p.531; Times, May 4, 1861, p.12.

41. Spectator, May 26, 1855, p.555; in this periodical's obituary notice, the artist was called "the Elizabeth Barrett Browning of Painting" (July 20, 1861, p.783).

42. Athenaeum, July 20, 1861, p.89.

43. See, for instance, the magazine Woman's report of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1872, "Women's Pictures at the Academy", May 18, 1872, p.333; and the Englishwoman's Review, April 24, 1858, p.569 where positive discrimination in the reviewing of exhibitions is called for.

44. Elisabeth Fries Ellet, Women Artists in all Ages and Countries, London, 1859, (Richard Bentley).

45. ibid, p.2.

46. Francoise Basch, Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel, New York, 1974.

47. "Girls... are brought up to think their education of no consequence, except as fitting them to take their place in their own social sphere. They are taught explicitly, or implicitly, that marriage is the only career open to them, and they learn but too quickly that success in that career does assuredly not depend on their efforts at self-improvement." Maria Grey, On the Special Requirements for Improving the Education of Girls, London, 1872, p.24, quoted in Bauer and Ritt, op.cit., p.119. This was, of course, in contrast to the stern reality of mid-Victorian society's demographic state: "There is... an actual ratio of thirty per cent of women now in England who never marry... The old assumption that marriage was the sole destiny of woman, and that it was the business of her husband to afford her support, is brought up short by the statement that one woman in four is certain not to marry,

and that three millions of women earn their own living at this moment in England." Frances Power Cobbe, "What shall we do with our Old Maids?", Fraser's Magazine, November, 1862, p.594, quoted in Bauer and Ritt, op.cit., p.72; for statistics, see Wanda Neff, Victorian Working Women, London, 1929.

48. Saturday Review, August 6, 1870, p.167.

49. "Young Ladies as they are", Saturday Review, December 24, 1870, p.801.

50. ibid, January 7, 1860, p.13.

51. "The Wild Women", Saturday Review, January 1, 1870, p.14: "The economical objection to the indiscriminate influx of women into the labour-market, whether as shopkeepers, clerks, preachers, journalists, or doctors, is found out to be that they hardly ever become skilled artisans in any employment which they take up. In America it has not been found to answer to give employment to any decent-looking girls. They always pursue business as a stop-gap, not as their work in life. They know that to marry, bear children, and keep the house is the female raison d'etre, and that ledgers, watch-making, and compounding medecines are merely taken up in default of a legitimate business for life." The author is, again, E.L. Linton.

52. Fanny Kortright, A little lower than the angels, London, 1874, p.55.

53. Margaret Oliphant,"Mill on the Subjection of Women", Edinburgh Review, October 1869, vol.130, p.599.

54. Athenaeum, March 28, 1863, p.423.

55. Martin Archer Shee, My Contemporaries, London, 1893, p.299; the entry is from December 1865.

56. Ruskin to Mme. Roch, editor of L'Espérance, a feminist journal based in Geneva, May 8, 1873, quoted in Cook and Wedderburn, op.cit., vol.34, p.509.

57. Art Journal, March 1, 1872, p.65.

58. "Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects", Saturday Review, December 15, 1855, p.116: "Again, looking at the matter in another point of view, it seems very doubtful to us whether anything which draws women away from their own firesides may not, in the end, be more productive of harm than good." This was hopelessly out of touch with the changes that were actually taking place in women's situation in the late '50's, which bore fruit in the next two decades in the form of numberless ranks of women working outside the home in jobs additional to those which working class women had long laboured at; see, for instance, Ray Strachey, The Cause, London, 1928, ch.12, where she recounts the entry of women into nursing, teaching, shop and clerical work; and Frances Martin's account of the progress of the College for Working Women in Macmillan's Magazine, no.240, October 1879, vol.40, p.483.

59. Elizabeth Gaskell, The Life of Charlotte Bronte, 1857.

60. J. Cordy Jeaffreson, "Female Artists and Art Schools in England", Art Pictorial and Industrial, August 1870, vol.1, no.2, p.28.

61. Sarah Tytler, Modern Painters and their Paintings, London, 1874, p.300.

62. Clayton, op.cit., vol.2, p.34 of Agnes Bouvier Nicholl and J.L. Roget, The History of the Old Watercolour Society, London, 1891, vol.2, p.426 of Mary Lofthouse.

63. Anne Ritchie was the daughter of William Thackeray, while, conversely, Fanny Trollope set her son Anthony a writing example, but these are the only obvious examples of the literary family connection affecting women. Charles Dickens' daughter, Kate, in fact became an artist rather than a writer (she exhibited as Kate Perugini, this being her name after her second marriage, which took place in 1874, a few years before she began to regularly exhibit.)

64. The Spectator critic, reviewing the Dudley exhibition in 1875, remarked with some asperity: "... we wish that artists, with whose names critics cannot always be expected to be familiar, would afford us some means of knowing by their designation whether they belong to the category of Mr. Mrs or Miss." Typographical errors in catalogues were commonplace, but it is quite probable that some contributors to the Dudley gallery - which was known as an outlet for the young and the female, especially - withheld their titles deliberately, thinking it less important than the critic did that he should know their sex and marital status.

65. Respectively, Art Journal, May 1, 1861, p.139; Illustrated London News, May 16, 1868, p.495; Times, April 15, 1850, p.5.

66. Respectively, Athenaeum, June 27, 1857, p.825; Art Journal, June 1, 1864, p.164; Illustrated London News, May 3, 1862, p.456; Spectator, February 8, 1862, p.157.

67. Sarah Tytler, op.cit., p.320, with reference to Bonheur: "One element of her success is said to have been the use which a crafty picture dealer made once of the combination of her talent and industry with her sex. (It was so wonderful that such work should be done by a woman!) Thus beyond a certain point the womanhood, which is so often brought forward either as an accusation of, or as a plea for, weakness, may operate advantageously in the assertion of a marvel."

68. Respectively, Spectator, May 21, 1853, p.495; Times, April 29, 1854, p.12; Spectator, May 31, 1862, p.606; Times, May 7, 1863, p.7; Saturday Review, May 23, 1863, p.662; Illustrated London News, June 8, 1867, p.578; Illustrated London News, May 16, 1868, p.495.

69. Spectator, February 8, 1862, p.157.

70. Respectively, Athenaeum, July 25, 1857, p.947; Times, May 14, 1867, p.6.

71. See, for instance, Francis Palgrave writing on "Women and the Fine Arts" in Macmillan's Magazine in 1865: "In asking that when they attempt certain forms on man's work they may be judged by his canons, women seem to us to demand what common sense and an honest deference to their sex require. To adopt any other standard is, virtually, to assume at once female inferiority." (Macmillan's Magazine, 1865, p.119). He has, however, ingenuously, explained why many critics did adopt special standards for women's work.

72. Modern scholarship and commentary unfortunately perpetuates this discrimination: in the review of Peter Johnson and Ernle Money's The Nasmyth Family of Painters, Leigh on Sea, 1977, (which deals fairly with the female members of the family), by Theodore Crombie in the Apollo, January 1979, the women Nasmyths are discounted while the men are scrutinised: "... the Nasmyth family of painters - Alexander and his two sons, Patrick and James, and his five artist daughters - do not yet have a literature really commensurate with their reputation..."; Alexander, Patrick and James are detailed, while Anne, Barbara, Charlotte, Elizabeth, Margaret and Jane are dusted into a corner together: "The five girls are more derivative from either their father or their elder brother, but can be said to have reasonably identifiable personalities" - which the reviewer does not go on to identify.

73. "EVB's Children's Summer", Spectator, January 29, 1853, p.109.

74. Times, January 14, 1863, p.9; the exhibition was the Lancashire distress show.

75. "Women as Artists", Spectator, July 29, 1876, p.956; critical standards were often shown to be posited on the amateur/artist distinction, as in:" "A Votive Offering" by Mrs. Pfeiffer may be taken as an indication how nearly amateurs reach to professional standards." (Art Journal, March 1, 1869, p.82, reviewing the Society of Female Artists exhibition).. ..."The figure-pieces, indeed, contributed by Miss Burgess, Miss Partridge, Miss Adelaide Claxton, Miss Bouvier, Miss Laird, and the lady well known under the disguise of EVB, rise out from their amateurish companions into positive professional rank" (Art Journal, February 1, 1868, p.46)... "Mrs. Robertson (sic) Blaine, a lady "patroness", paints... with a will and a mastery seldom belonging to an amateur" (Art Journal, February 1, 1866, p.56).

76. Spectator, June 7, 1851, p.547; the Amateur Exhibitions were started by Gambart in 1850.

77. Athenaeum, May 22, 1852, p.583.

78. Times, June 2, 1851, p.6; for all this, the review mentioned both male and female works favourably.

79. Martin Hardie, Watercolour Painting in Britain, vol.3, London, 1968, p.245.

80. George Eliot, Middlemarch, London, 1950, ch.7 and ch.16; though published in 1871/2, the novel is set in the late 1820's and 1830's.

81. Anne Bronte's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall first appeared in 1848; another literary heroine involved in art appeared in Dinah Craik's Olive of 1850, wherein the eponymous artist is an oil painter who exhibits at the Royal Scottish Adademy.

82. Lee Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work, Newton Abbot, 1973, p.3; although subtitled "Middle-class Working Women in England and Wales 1850-1914", the women who are Holcombe's subjects only work in teaching, nursing, ships, clerical jobs, and the civil service - there is no mention of women in the arts other than as teachers.

83. This might include any work which rendered her conspicuous outside the house, and strictly speaking, excluded her from work which brought her much into contact with men; but, since it was unladylike for her to take money for her activities anyway - her work was meant to be a labour of love, philanthropic to one and all: "(the ideal) required of her that she seek her pleasure and fulfil her function by serving others - her god, her sovereign, the poor, the ill, the heathen at home and abroad, her less fortunate sisters, her children, and - primarily - her husband. Self-denial and self-sacrifice were to be her lot..." (Bauer and Ritt, op.cit., p.3) - simple logic allowed her to look askance at other aspects of the ideal, also.

84. Spectator, February 16, 1861, p.164.

85. Among much literature that dealt with the 'problem' of a preponderancy of women over men in British society in the 1850's and after, see W. Greg, Why are women redundant?, London, 1869.

86. Surtees, op. cit., letters B32 and B30, p.107 and p.105.

87. ibid

88. Dictionary of National Biography, vol.4, p.426; it is important to remember that engraving connoted the artisan and the sweatshop - quite inappropriate for a respectable female.

89. Clayton, op.cit., vol.2, p.274; Fitzjames was thus one of many women whose creativity was channelled into the artistic development of others (see below, ch.2).

90. ibid, vol.2, p.68.

91. Dictionary of National Biography, vol.7, p.1247.

92. Art Journal, 1876, p.47; the Athenaeum, reporting the artist's death in 1875, went into more detail: "... she married, in 1814, Mr. Harrison, a gentleman in easy circumstances. He, unfortunately, as his family increased, was induced to enter into a partnership that proved disastrous. He became a broken-spirited invalid, and the duty of providing for a family of twelve children devolved upon Mrs. Harrison. This duty she bravely performed, and it is interesting to know that many of her loveliest groups were what Thackeray has called pot-boilers..." (Athenaeum, December 4, 1875, p.758).

93. Louise Jopling, Twenty Years of my Life, London, 1825, p.5.

94. Caroline Dall, Woman's Right to Labour, Boston, 1859, quoted in the Athenaeum, April 14, 1860, p.504.

95. Magazine of Art, 1884, p.98.

96. Bachmann and Piland, Women Artists, London and Metuchen, N.J., 1978, introduction, p.xvii.

97. Respectively, Clayton, op.cit., vol.2, p.34; vol.2, p.130; vol.2, p.177; vol.2, p.264; vol.2, p.299.

98. William Michael Rossetti noted in his diary, December 12, 1870: "she does not now pursue art, except under the form of Spirit Drawings." William Rossetti's Diary 1810/3, ed. Odette Barnard, Oxford, 1977. An alternative and quite different reason is suggested, however, by the artist's mother: "Our daughter had, both by her pen and pencil, taken her place amongst the successful artists and writers of the day, when, in the spring of 1856, a severe private censure of one of her oil-paintings by a king among critics so crushed her sensitive nature as to make her yield to her bias for the supernatural and withdraw from the ordinary arena of the fine arts." (quoted by G.B. Hill, The Letters of D.G. Rossetti to William Allingham, London, 1897, p.204.)

99. Art Journal, January, 1876, p.12.

100. Letter of 1854, quoted in Cornelia Carr, Harriet Hosmer, London, 1913, p.35.

101. Fanny Kemble to Frederick Leighton, February 1862 and April 1862, quoted in Emilie Barrington, Life, Letters and Work of Frederick Leighton, London, 1906, vol.2, p.72 and p.76.

102. Henrietta Ward, Reminiscences, London, 1911, p.88.

103. Henrietta Ward, Memories of Ninety Years, London, 1924, p.52.

104. Jopling, op.cit., p.5.

105. Athenaeum, July 14, 1855, p.811; for an interesting comparison of the progress of societal reform for women and the development of literary images of the same, see Jenni Calder, Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction, London, 1976, p.213-6.

106. Harriet Martineau, "Female Industry", Edinburgh Review, April, 1859, vol.109, p.333.

107. Gordon S. Haight, ed. The George Eliot Letters, New Haven and London, 1954/5, vol.3, no.134.

108. Critic, May 10, 1862, p.468; this reviewer was not the only one to be so struck by the show women made at the Academy in the early '60's: see below, ch.3

109. Before this, there had been Anna Mary Howitt's An Art Student in Munich, London, 1853 (Longman), which was even preceded by a serial story in the Illustrated Exhibitor of 1852, called "Sisters in Art" (see below, ch.2): because this appeared anonymously, however, it is difficult to asses

its significance as a statement on the subject of women artists: it will be examined below, however, for its ideas on female art education.

110 Athenaeum, December 24, 1859, p.849; Ellet's career in literature was, indeed, rather that of an anthologist than anything else: her other publications included The Women of the American Revolution (1848, 1850), Pioneer Women of the West (1852), Summer Rambles in the West (1853), The Practical Housekeeper: a cyclopaedia of domestic economy (1857), and The Queens of American Society (1867). The 'intelleot-of-women' question could be seen as having set in almost a decade earlier, with the establishment of Queen's College in 1850; F.D. Maurice's Lectures for Ladies had started the year before that, while in 1854 the opening of the Cheltenham Ladies' College was a sympton of the growing urge for better education among women, which continued to provoke debate. The Englishwoman's Review, from its inception in 1857, and its sister paper the Englishwoman's Journal, devoted much energy to the discussion of women's mental capacities and educational needs.

111. Englishwoman's Review, December 24, 1859, p.311.

112. Athenaeum, December 24, 1859, p.849.

113. Her only British publications, apart from the Artists, were Joanna of Sicily (1840); Christian Keepsake (1850); Family Pictures from the Bible (1854).

114. For a modern appraisal of the book, see Sandra L. Langer, Woman's Art Journal, vol.1, no.2 (Fall 1980/Winter 1981), p.55.

115. Reported in the Art Student, August 1, 1864, p.136-7; the Society had been formed, in January 1863, by South Kensington and Academy Schools students (see letter from F. Scarlet Potter, Art Student, April 1, 1864, p.57.)

116. ibid, September 1, 1864, p.146.

117. J. Cordy Jeaffreson, "Female Artists and Art Schools in England", Art Pictorial and Industrial, vol.1, no.2, August 1870, p.25-30, p.50-2, p.70-3; it is probable that the writer had the acquaintance of some female artists of his own time, since he appears in the family photograph album of the painter John Brett, and would therefore have known the painter's sister Rosa, who painted, and Louisa Starr (Canziani), who also appears in the album as a friend of the family. I am grateful to descendants of the Brett painters for showing this material to me. See below, ch.6, for more information on the Bretts, and A Book of Recollections, London, 1894, for more about the writer himself.

118. For, even though he uses terms like "their masculine oppressors oppressors", he seems to hold out little hope or desire for the change in individual and societal division of labour that would be needed before women's situation really improved.

119. Clayton's other publications, Notable Women and Celebrated Women (1859/60 and 1875) featured no artists at all, but

much more conventionally interesting women, such as wives, daughters, Christians and philanthropists. She also wrote Female Warriors in 1879 for Tinsley.

120. Art Journal, 1876, p.256.

121. ibid.

122. Englishwoman's Review, June 15, 1876, p.250.

123. "Womanliness", Saturday Review, August 6, 1870, p.167; the writer is Eliza Lynn Linton.

124. "The Ladies' Club", Saturday Review, January 7, 1860, p.13.

CHAPTER 2: EDUCATION

It has already been said that discussion of the mid-Victorian female artist's situation took two main strands to weave its fabric, the threads of genius and of diligence winding their way through the debate throughout the period. Diligence, and its handmaiden, education, will be now examined as a most crucial aspect of women's executive relation to art in the period. In the late 1850's, as discussion about women artists increased and developed in complexity and subtlety, the question of their education came more and more to the fore. Women themselves, critics, and commentators, all came to see education as the key factor in the matter (even if some insisted that it was, still, a case of pearls and swine); and, since the art education to which women came to have access by the 1880's was still far from perfectly suited to their needs or desires, this view remained generally popular until the end of the mid-century period (although it was not only the most ungenerous critics who had resort once more to the question of genius, once women's art education had improved and yet they still had not, as a body, catapulted en masse into the front ranks of the day's artists). The genius debate was often brought back into play, however, in the 1870's and in the following decade, as a hedge against the newly-trained woman artist claiming the equal acknowledgement, attention, and praise, to which her improved educational opportunities made her better able to aspire.[1]

Although the business of this chapter is to discuss and describe art education in the period, the question of a training for painting, sculpture and design will first be examined as one particular aspect of the issue of women's general education, both formal and informal. For, those who determined what art education women could get, were influenced by societal norms: educationalists, critics, artists (women and men alike), were subject to widely held notions of the nature of women and the nature of society, and the relationship of these two, just as was anyone at the time. It was the inevitability of the two factors in the equation that the 'woman question' attacked, and

the development of art education for women shows, in its fraught and uneven progress, how difficult to solve this problem was.

Anthea Callen - although her main concern is with the education of women for design - has vividly and convincingly described the social and cultural background to the education issue en large: she writes, "Requiring women to be professional in their work-life was to place them in a role which was in complete contradiction to the ideals of womanhood." [2] The battle for substantial and constructive art education for women, joined in the mid-century, was made so long and arduous because the idea that a woman should take seriously an occupation outside the home - a breadwinning occupation, moreover, and one which had some pretension to enduring public status - clashed so fundamentally with the established structure and values of Victorian life, and particularly with its hierarchies of gender and class. [3] This was even though the practice of art was seen to be in certain ways feminine, rather than masculine. Within the structure of artistic life, this issue caused as much disturbance as it did in life at large: the established givens of an artist's existence - the Royal Academy, the hierarchy of genres, the distinction between professional and amateur, the standing of the life class - were all challenged, directly or indirectly, by the issue of women's art education. The debate centred upon the Royal Academy, its status and practices and notions of Fine Art, but involved, too, such less obviously relevant issues as the economic role of the artist and the social role of art. The education issue also embraced, if not confronted, such matters as the notion of masculine and feminine art, and the relationship between fine art and applied art or art and craft. These points will emerge now as the attitudes towards women's education are discussed, and later in this chapter as that education itself is detailed.

The recollections of a woman intimately involved with art and artists in the middle of the century can serve to introduce the most obvious failings in the education that women conventionally

received in art; the writer is Georgiana Burne-Jones:

> "It is pathetic to think how we women longed to keep pace with the men, and how gladly they kept us by them until their pace quickened and we had to fall behind. It was the same a few years later with the Du Mauriers, I remember: he brought his handsome fiancée, Miss Wightwick, to see us, and she and I took counsel together about practising wood-engraving in order to reproduce the drawings of the men we loved. I had begun it already, but she, though eagerly interested, had scarcely seen the tools required for the art, and I do not know how far she went in it. I can recall Du Maurier's distress, though, when she drove a sharp graver into her hand one day. I stopped, as so many women do, well on this side of tolerable skill, daunted by the path which has to be followed absolutely alone if the end is to be reached... With Mrs. Rossetti... too, art was a plant that grew in the garden of love, and strong personal feeling was at the root of it; one sees in her black-and-white designs and beautiful little water-colours(figs.3c/4) Gabriel always looking over her shoulder, and sometimes taking pencil or brush from her hand to complete the things she had begun." 4

The want of a personal conviction for art was the reason often given for women failing to be, or become, good artists, and this lack was seen to be evidenced by their failing to study at art. The question of personal ambition - how seriously one took oneself - is undoubtedly a very significant one, and what can be gathered from the foregoing passage is the sense that, if the woman does not value her skills very highly, this lack of self-assurance is derived as much from the attitudes of the men around her, as from any self-generated deprecation of her potential as an artist (Du Maurier was distressed at his fiancée's accident, Rossetti took the pencil from Siddal's hand). For, though an interest in art-making is by such company encouraged, yet the rivalry - unspoken though it might be - between men and women as creators of art, and the difference in intellectual prowess attributed to them both, not to mention, if they were a couple, the submissive position expected of the woman, [5] must have tended to the woman not putting herself forward, to being reluctant to

appear to challenge the man's supremacy. The result of this would be that her incentives for learning art seriously would be very slight: she was not a 'proper' artist - her husband, brother, father, lover, was that - so what need had she of proper training? This idea was widely expressed throughout the earlier part of the mid-century (later on it became an embarrassingly reactionary position to espouse): an easily accessible example is a passage from Sesame and Lilies ("Of Queen's Gardens), where Ruskin writes:

> "... a man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly, while a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only so far as may enable her to sympathise in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends." 6

Women's education was to derive from what the man in charge of her (husband, father or politician) thought fit for her:

> "Trust to her husband to impart the knowledge he has gained of intellectual things of which she is ignorant; he will prove her best teacher - a far more effectual one than you can ever hope to become..." 7

When a woman did, exceptionally, appear as first-rate, who seemed possessed of a personal conviction for art and some individuality, one of the prime reasons given for her apparent overturning of the norm described above, was her attitude to education:

> "Miss Elizabeth Thompson, who painted the picture "Reading the Roll Call after a Battle in the Crimea", (fig.35) which has produced so strong an impression at the Royal Academy this year, is a striking example of the importance of systematic training in art. This lady joined the School of Art at South Kensington in 1861, at the age of fifteen; she stayed there for one or two years, and then went to the branch school at Boston, Lincolnshire, taking in 1862 the medal of the department for monochrome painting, and in 1864 that for flower and still life painting, and in 1865 that for figure-painting. In 1866 she returned to the central school

> where she remained steadily at work till 1870, gaining numerous prizes. She then went abroad, and with the power in her art which she had gained, she studied with the best possible advantage the various works abounding in such profusion in various parts of the Continent. Such a career as this is an evident answer to those who fancy that success in art comes by instinct alone, and has not also to be worked at in the same way as other things." 8 (This passage will recall the similar piece on Bonheur quoted above: the two artists were often likened to each other.)

The combination of the idea that drawing and painting were skills that could be 'picked up', with the notion that women's attitudes were by definition unskilled (that is to say, that even if it was allowed that some tasks undertaken by women were difficult, it was considered that there was no science to such tasks, nor any great body of knowledge of which one had to be mistress in order to practise them), conspired to allow women to go on thinking that for them to demand serious art training was unnecessary, and unfeminine; and to allow men - for the most part, men who should have known better (that is to say, other artists) - to go on supporting this idea. They can be seen - male artists, that is - as having a vested interest in perpetuating this belief on women's own parts: a modern writer puts it thus:

> "All too often, the treatment of art as if it were a 'calling' or a 'vocation' overlooks the professional standing of the artist and the economic value attached to the work he or she produces. The resistance met in a variety of historical circumstances towards the assimilation of the arts provides a useful insight into questions of the social position of the artist. The disqualification of women from life classes in the nineteenth century, for example, not only demonstrates a much-vaunted desire to safeguard female morality, but may also conceal the wish to preserve the professional standing of the artist free from the incursion of (women)... The notion of leisure was intimately attached to attitudes towards female activity in art..." 9

This of course recalls the concept of female amateurism already discussed, and brings back the question of female genius; for a ground given for education not being more sound where women were concerned was, that they had not the wherewithal to capitalise on a good education. People resisting the rise of female ambition in art beyond the leisure level very often had recourse to the idea of art as a matter of calling, which, though a less dramatic word than genius, implies that special quality which fits a person for a certain activity. Thus, for instance, the Saturday Review critic reviewing the Society of Female Artists show in 1858:

> "... we are quite certain that art can and ought to be, to a considerable extent, practised to advantage by women. How far, it is difficult to say, and we would rather not blunder over the horoscope. That women have never yet taken a position in art is, in a certain sense, no argument against their doing so when they make up their minds; but, in another sense, it is an argument. The real born artist reveals himself (sic) by scratching and scribbling, through good report and evil report, almost as soon as he can hold a pencil, his absurd childish notions, and his dislocated perceptions - his soldiers and men in armour, dogs and cats, men smoking pipes, and cottages with smoke coming out of their chimneys. He insists upon colouring engravings, and drawing moustachios to smooth lips. That is the way the individual male artist shows forth, and the whole male-artist genus; and it may fairly be suggested that, if there were to be a female-artist genus under present favourable circumstances, there would have been in the past too, however unfavourable... we have no evidence as yet of imaginative power in art among women, proportionate to that of men." 10

As the debate over women's achievements in the arts - past, present and potential - developed in the next decades, this simplistic and logically false position of 'genius will out' was often refuted. A particularly perspicacious example of this was in the Spectator's review of Clayton's English Female Artists, in 1876; it anticipates Virginia Woolf's 'room of one's own' in its sensitivity to women's actual experience:

"The external difficulties, such as want of proper schools and teachers, are only now beginning to be removed, but they <u>are</u> being removed. Suppose these, and also the difficulties of parental opposition, want of time, and want of strength, done away with, there still remain those mental habits which involuntarily influence a girl's actions. In choosing to be an artist, and giving up her time to study, she is wilfully leaving the beaten track of home duties, so plainly marked out for her; has she 'that within' which shall warrant her desertion of those duties? This cannot be answered until years of study have proved her capacity or incapacity. But supposing her mind to be made up on this point, she has still many little qualms of conscience at neglecting little social and household duties, which do not seem very important, but which she feels it selfish to neglect. A boy has few duties save his own education and business in life, - that is his primary duty. Above all things, 'Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille', and 'Stille', 'solitude', is just the most impossible thing for a girl in ordinary English life to attain. We could mention many things which, small as they are, act like water dripping on a stone, and wear away the calm sense of self-development most necessary to an artist..." 11

However, the image of the born artist - whose natural gifts seemed a wonderful substitute for training - was a dear and popularly held one, and despite the fact that the born artist's distinguishing characteristic of innate genius was not one which it was easy for the popular mind to readily couple with the name of woman, the persuasive influence of this image introduced itself time and time again in attempts to establish women as artists, (the hold of the image meaning that, to be thus established, women had also to display natural gifts of an undeniable order): Clayton reflects this clearly, in her accounts in which the eventual painter (or whatever) was to be seen emerging in the nascent woman's scribblings or jottings. Although Clayton's evident susceptibility to the sentimental may well have encouraged her to interpret her subjects in this way, it can reasonably be conjectured that the artist in question, also, shared

this image of the artist being born rather than made, since Clayton apparently took her material from the subject's mouth, if she was extant. Thus:

Frances Rossiter, née Seares, "did not learn drawing at school, but used, as a girl, to copy in pencil or chalk anything that took her fancy, when she could find leisure time"; Emma Walter

> "was a mere child, only five years old, when she made her first attempt with a pencil... From that time, she found her chief delight in drawing everything she could see, not only from the flat, but, by her father's desire, from real objects";

for Harriette Seymour, "The great delight of her playtime was to draw"; in the case of Emma Cooper, née Wren, "from earliest childhood her great passion was for drawing." [12]

Natural talent is certainly not set against serious study - an attitude which Clayton reports on disapprovingly in the case of Edith Courtauld:

> "Through a friend, the pictures were shown to Sir Edwin Landseer, and his advice asked as to her future mode of study, especially whether she should have a master or go to art school - for hitherto she had had no instruction whatever. His verdict on her talent was both flattering and encouraging, but on the matter of teaching his words were: 'Don't let her have any; what masters teach she knows already. Continued study from nature is all she needs.' So the question was settled, never to be debated again save years later by the student herself - and she, poor child, was launched rudderless on the wide sea of art, to find her way alone and unguided..." [13]

- it is sometimes seen by Clayton as the light that guides towards it; thus in Eleanor Brown,

> "all the long-suppressed desires to be an artist came forth, and she commenced with the greatest

> enthusiasm, working from morning till night, sketching in all weathers, caring not a jot for wind, rain, or cold, not even for the midges!" 14

Clayton's romanticism is tempered in Roget's later accounts of artists whom she discusses, with the recognition that earnestness may be no equal for knowledge: of Mrs. Criddle (Mary Ann Alabaster) he writes that:

> "the thirst for art was strong within her, and many a time would she steal from her bed in the early morn to try her untutored hand at painting in oil. At length her will prevailed and, at the age of nineteen, she was allowed to attend the studio of Hayter, with a view to devoting herself to an artist's career." 15

When women who, though active in the mid-century, had grown up at a time when formal training was very hard to come by if one was female, were viewed by the less progressive, their artistic ability was romanticised, seen as heroic or exceptional; but even their success could not undermine the present generation's demand for better education than had existed in the past. Thus Ellet, in 1859, on Fanny Corbaux (who was born in 1812), [16] tries to glorify what was patently a deprived situation:

> "When she was only fifteen years of age, her father suddenly lost his property, and became indigent. The daughter had received only superficial instruction in drawing, but determined to use her small skill to support her father and herself. With the ardent spirit of youth she threw herself into the undertaking, sparing herself no severe labour; and so well directed were her efforts that, before the end of the year, she obtained a silver medal for her watercolour drawings. Within the next three years, she received another similar token of approbation, and the gold medal of the Society of Arts. All this time she had been her own instructor." 17

This somewhat desperate, and obligatory, spirit of self-help determined the education that not a few women got: Clayton recounts some cases even in the mid-century generation, when the avenues open were slightly more numerous, though alarmingly disparate:

> "Her education was very desultory, especially in art. A few lessons from a landscape painter in Paris, and a session at South Kensington, constituted all the training she received till she was about twenty years of age. Then circumstances admitted of her obtaining good private lessons in figure drawing, and entering Heatherly's School of Art..." (Elizabeth Collingridge); 18

> "For her first instruction in the use of brushes she was indebted to the kindness of a friend, Mr. E. Ray, of the British Museum, who having at her desire obtained for her the necessary materials, showed her how to use them, and set her to work copying oil... Among her friends was Mr. C. Rossiter the artist, and to him she naturally spoke of her anxious desire to study painting thoroughly and earnestly. Mr. Rossiter introduced her to Mr. Leigh, of Newman Street. Mr. Leigh was her master to the time of his death... On leaving Leigh's academy, Miss Seares received lessons in drawing and painting from Mr. C. Rossiter..." (Frances Fripp Seares, later Rossiter); 19

> "She was almost entirely self-taught, receiving a year's instruction from two very inefficient masters, both acknowledging the humilitating fact that she knew nearly as much of drawing as they did themselves. At sixteen, she took some lessons in flower painting from Mr. Holland, in a class. At twenty-one she was at school in Calais, and learned chalk drawing and perspective for three months only. This is all the teaching she has ever received..." (Emma Walter) 20

This makeshifting is distinct from the approach taken by the radical women of the late fifties, who keenly felt that natural ability should be given the benefit of systematic training. It will be sufficient to illustrate the pertinacity of a few such

individuals:

> "... there was now some chance of her realising the hopes she entertained of one day becoming an artist. After much consultation, and not without sundry misgivings as to the result on the part of her father and some friends, Miss Osborn was allowed to attend an evening class at Mr. Dickinson's academy in Maddox Street; Mr. Mogford was her master, and he held out great hopes of his pupil's future success. Thus encouraged, Miss Osborn pursued her studies, attending the morning classes in Maddox Street, under Mr. Leigh, who had succeeded Mr. Mogford. At the expiration of three months her father intimated his desire that the lessons should be discontinued for a time; Mr. Leigh then most generously offered for her to come to his house where a young lady was studying oil painting, and the two might work in company under his directions. The offer was thankfully accepted, and Miss Osborn was a daily student at his residence, and subsequently at his gallery in Newman Street for a year..." (Emily Osborn, b. 1834); 21

> "Miss Turck showed an early love for pencils and paintboxes, and her mother having herself great natural talent for drawing, besides being a woman of advanced and cultivated ideas, the child enjoyed the advantage of sound and practical teaching in the elements of art. This was the more noteworthy, as no-one on either side of the family was in any way engaged in artistic pursuits, or could be supposed to suggest the proper course of study to develop any talent that might exist... On returning home from school in Germany (1848), Eliza Turck was placed for six months at Cary's School of Art, where, although studying in somewhat amateur fashion, she made good progress. Afterwards she took lessons in oil painting, during another six months, from Mr. W. Gale. Then, being left without regular instruction, and not feeling sufficient power to work well without some stimulus, a period of comparative idleness ensued, broken by occasional fits of hard work, succeeded by great discouragement, after the manner of clever, enthusiastic young girls left to their own unguided resources. In 1852 Miss Turck entered the figure class of the Female School of Art in Gower Street, and remained there for a whole year... During the time spent here by Miss Turck occurred her father's failure in business, which naturally

induced her to take an even more serious view than before of her favourite pursuit. Although her family still continued somewhat to discountenance the idea of an artist's career for her, she herself never ceased from that period to regard painting as the occupation of her life. In 1859/60 she passed fourteen months in Antwerp for purposes of study..." (Eliza Turck, b. 1832); 22

"We moved to No.33 Harewood Square and for the first time I had my own studio. But during the brief stay at St. John's Wood I was working hard at Art under Mr. Henry Sass, of Bloomsbury... At the end of the year my husband insisted on my taking apartments in Bloomsbury to be close to the Art School... and so I studied anatomy and drawing for six months assiduously. How I enjoyed it!....
... The Royal Academy 'Lectures' for students have always been held in high esteem, but women were disqualified on account of their sex when I was young. Edward, ever mindful of my success and anxious that I should share his privileges, encouraged me to be a pioneer in breaking through a hard and fast convention.... I enjoyed the first lecture so much that I determined to go regularly... the next lecture I attended had five women present, and the following one had thirty of the fair sex. After this triumph I went regularly and gained great advantages..." (Henrietta Ward, b. 1832) 23

A noteworthy point here, is that these are women who persist in their art despite family wishes (pace Ellet), and whose position is made much easier by the presence of sympathetic family members - necessarily, as Clayton says in Turck's case, "of advanced and cultivated ideas." This is a point which recurs in the histories of women who did get some sound training: of Emily Desvignes ("her father, the late Herbert Clayton Desvignes, an animal painter of some merit, took her in hand and gave her instruction"),[24] of Maria Harrison ("her mother instructed her in the art of flower-painting"),[25] (figs.36/7), of Elisabeth Rous Phillips ("It was under the tuition of her father that this artist acquired an early knowledge of that art which she was one day to follow as a profession"),[26] of Sophy Warren ("Miss Warren had no regular

instructor, but constantly painted and studied with her brother"),[27] (figs.38/41), of Agnes Bouvier Nicholl ("She had the most excellent guidance from her father and elder brothers"),[28] of Emily Pfeiffer ("from her father... Mrs. Pfeiffer inherits her love of art from the same source she obtained that measure of first principles which has guided her studies"),[29] of Rosa Brett, whose parents took an intense interest in her art, which was guided to an extent by her painter brother John,[30] (fig.42), of Barbara Leigh Smith (Bodichon), whose father made her an allowance that enabled her to facilitate her own choice of study,[31] and of Elizabeth Thompson, who had a painting mother and a liberal father who jointly encouraged her talents.[32]

This is the positive side of the family connection. To grow up, as such women did, in an environment where their art was taken seriously, made them more vocal in their unsatisfaction with the state of art education generally available to women than a previous generation had been. For a member of an artistically inclined or artistically active family, a talent was a responsibility, rather than a social accomplishment. Also, of course, such women were growing up in an atmosphere of increasing feminism, and many of the women prominent in the fight for women's rights were also concerned with art.

The Art Journal's reviewer noticed this alliance in his critique of the 1866 Society of Female Artists exhibition, saying:

> "Miss Bessie Parkes and other ladies give to this praiseworthy effort their support, as one among many ways, all but too few, whereby women may find a vocation, and by work not uncongenial to a lady make a livlihood or add to the resources of the household. The painting of pictures is certainly an advance on embroidery, work in Berlin wool, or ordinary sewing, under the inanity and drudgery whereof the female intellect has suffered torture and degradation." 33

while individual liaisons between art and feminism can be seen

in the persons of Harriet Grote (who founded the Society of Female Artists, with others, in 1857 - see below, chapter 3), the young Anna Mary Howitt, and Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (who took her art as seriously as her politics: "It is my duty to be an artist", she told a friend, "I do wish I had three immortal lives. I would spend only one with my Eugene, and the other two for art and social life.")[34] In addition, the Englishwoman's Review, the mouthpiece of the Langham Place côterie of feminists, which was started in 1857, featured artists strongly in its "Remarkable Women" series in the first six months of publication, including Bonheur and Corbaux.[35] Thus, the serious practice of art came to be seen increasingly as a field in which the modern woman should seek to assert herself and demand her rights and raise her sights. Such comments as the following, expressed in a review of Emily Davies' writings on female education which appeared in the Athenaeum in 1866, can be seen as applying to art especially, though the connection is not explicitly made:

> "... we can see the direction in which the aspirations of women are tending, for extreme opinions are like straws which show the way the wind blows. (He means by 'extreme opinions' the views Davies expresses.) The solid gain that has been made is, we think, indicated in the very decided wish expressed, that women should be taught thoroughly, and have their attainments tested severely, so that whatever they learn, whether it be little or whether it be much, shall at least be real and solid. They resent compliments to their sex, and desire that what they learn shall have the same intrinsic value as what is taught to men, and not be superficial." 36

This sentiment was expressed with rather more sense of solidarity, by Frances Palgrave, several years earlier:

> "... although professing to place woman on a level with himself, man (she complains) does not honestly carry out his profession. Does she write poems or songs, paint or carve, study medecine or science? He declines to test her performance by the

> regular laws for these matters made and provided, and veils his instinctive contempt for female judgment or genius under a cloud of flattery, which is only one degree less offensive to a woman of spirit than the open scorn that at other times will show itself beneath his tinsel praises. It is impossible, the woman justly adds, that whilst treated thus, her sex shall put forth its full capabilities." 37

A particular proof of this conviction had been published in the Illustrated Exhibitor in 1852, anticipating the seriousness with which Ellet took women's artistic ambition in 1859 and the views to which the Athenaeum critic was responding in 1866 by several years. This was "Sisters in Art", a story which ran for eight episodes and was published in the magazine anonymously. [38] The heroine was a teenage girl with a love of art, and she is the spokeswoman for many expressions of ambition for women's art education, such as her early speech to the men who will prove to be her patrons:

> "... art does not consist in the mere ability to use the brush and pencil - there must be education, both moral and intellectual, and high in their kind, as well as resolutely carried onward, if a position beyond mediocrity is sought and desired. But we meet with young women, who think the only diligence requisite in the artist is with the pen and pencil, the cast and living model; and they forget all reading, all study, all view of nature beyond the mere artistic one. Miss Beaumont and I, however, think differently; we have ourselves found the benefit of education and study, and we shall, if possible, endeavour by and by to open an artistic school or college, in which art and literary education shall be made one." 39

Alice had already been characterised as diligent and industrious as regards her talent:

> "... the dear child had always had a great love for the pencil, and having been well-instructed, both by Mr. Fountains and by a drawing-master, who for the last two years has come once a week

from York to give her lessons, she is already very clever and apt that way. Many doing as much and well would rest contented, but not so Alice, who is very like poor dead Robert (her father) in these things. So she has been pining for further instruction ever since the old drawing-master said plainly, that he could teach her no more." 40

Later in the story, the two young women open their studio, for tuition purposes, to "such educated young women as were already so far proficient in art as to be able to take advantage" [41] of their resources. Our heroine's ultimate ideal, however, is revealed soon after when her aunt offers her the money which the girl's uncle has left to her:

> "I have a desire, an earnest, soul-desire... to found a noble school, a Woman's College of Art, worthy of the time and its needs! where there would be lectures and lessons, not at first sight related to art, but most intimately connected with the great and true advance which art has yet to have!... think what a grand, noble life of duty, usefulness, and ministry to the true advance of art, in connexion with woman's mind and woman's labour, we might carry out! Think of this! think of this!" 42

This dream is, of course, - this being fiction - realised, and the story concludes with the heroines, having worked their way up in art from being dependent orphans to strong-minded women, establishing the Female School of Art and Design; the writer gives this idea of what education it offers:

> "But there was first to lay down the syllabus of study - a work of large thought and care - and to procure fitting masters for such branches of it as, though relating directly, or indirectly, to the advance of art, did not come within Dr. or Mr. Beaumont's programme relating to the general sciences, or their especial province of anatomy, or within the range of those classes for languages, mathematics, botany, and the general principles of art, which the sisters proposed severally to superintend." 43

In the final passage of the concluding episode, the author speaks for herself, in the first person, of what has evidently all along been her own ambition for women's art education:

> "The school has now been opened for four years, and found to answer in a degree scarcely expected even by the sanguine, noble, earnest, enthusiastic minds of those who first saw the need of such an institution for the advance of female education in relation to art.... It answers in an eminent degree, because it replies to, as it were, what was a vast need in our time - a true school of art in relation to design, based upon those a priori principles of art and education, namely, that art up to a certain point is the corollary of many forms and departments of knowledge, instead of being as heretofore considered in the common art-schools of the country as consisting of nothing more than in the objective use of the brush or pencil." [44]

The author imagines, then, not a school of fine art, and a generation of female painters and sculptors, but what she calls a school of <u>design</u> and a flock of women designers - in fine, crafts-people rather than artists, in conventional terms. Yet she gives the artwork that they will produce such impressive tools to work with: "mathematics, geometry, anatomy, geology, general science, botany... modern languages",[45] that one has to conclude that the students' ambitions - and capabilities - will soar above the sort of art that she means the school to produce: "(the school) aims to professionally educate women for a formula of art especially her own - that of design."[46] Whatever the result of her fiction would be in real life, it is clear that the author is at one and the same time asserting design, or not-fine art, as women's proper art-sphere, and elevating that art-form to equal status with the 'belle arti'. This is significant, because the two principal avenues of approach that women tried to art education during the mid-century period, the government school and the Academy Schools, taught design and fine art, respectively, and the former welcomed women while the latter did not.

A real-life companion to "Sisters in Art" appeared one year later, in Anna Mary Howitt's two-volume autobiographical account of "An art student in Munich" [47]; at one stage of this narrative, the author and her two companions express their ideal in female art education in remarkably similar terms to those used by the author of "Sisters in Art". Howitt uses the same tone of earnest, almost religious enthusiasm:

> "Justina, with her expansive views, and her strong feelings in favour of associated homes, talked now of an Associated Home, at some future day, for such "sisters" as had no home of their own. She had a large scheme of what she calls the Outer and Inner Sisterhood. The Inner, to consist of the Art-sisters bound together by their one object, and which she fears may never number many in their band; the Outer Sisterhood to consist of women, all workers, and all striving after a pure moral life, but belonging to any profession, any pursuit. All should be bound to help each other in such ways as were most accordant with their natures and characters. Among these would be needlewomen, good Elizabeth -------s, whose real pleasure is needlework, whose genius lies in shaping and sewing, and whose sewing never comes undone, - the good Elizabeth! how unspeakably useful would such an one as thou be to the poor Art-sisters, whose stockings must be mended! Perhaps, too, there would be some one sister whose turn was preserving, and pickling, and cooking; she, too, would be a treasure every day, and very ornamental and agreeable would be her preparation of cakes and good things for the evening meetings once or twice a month. And what beautiful meetings those were to be, as we pictured them in the different studios!" 48

This vision has clear parallels with the Nazarene brotherhood, and the range of activities suggested here is very much more a celebration of womanly tasks than the array of learned skills which the author of "Sisters in Art" put forward, but they prioritise art, and emphasise the generally elevating aim of devoting one's efforts to art, an effect which was picked out when the actual Female School of Art/Design was assessed much later.

(The Spectator, for instance, in 1860, noted that:

> "The success of the school is mainly of the kind that cannot be put down in facts and figures. Its humanizing, elevating influence on the majority of the students, can only be appreciated by those who have seen its effect on the character of the pupils. This School of Design, like every other methodical, well-managed instrument of intellectual education, has produced the best moral effects..." 49)

The danger here was that an art education would simply be, in the end, a 'training for life' rather than an education in the cultivation and exercise of specific skills, however lofty in character they might be. Howitt, herself, took her inspiration from a fine artist - to study under Wilhelm Kaulbach was her reason for going to Munich - and produced fine art (oil paintings) rather than design, and her works seem to have been characterised by diligent and earnest study and themes of some intellectual or spiritual consequence. [50] (fig.43). She expressed, in her book, in no uncertain terms, her belief that women could produce better work if they applied themselves better. She shares this with the author of "Sisters in Art", who, through Alice, castigated less than resolute women for not having that conviction in their art that would lead them to pursue a serious training, be such a training self-applied or obtained through exploitation of available resources. [51] Howitt holds forth thus:

> "... the longer I live, the less grows my sympathy with women who are always wishing themselves men. I cannot but believe that all in life that is truly noble, truly good, truly desirable, God bestows upon us women in as unsparing measure as upon men. He only desires us, in His great benevolence, to stretch forth our hands and to gather for ourselves the rich joys of intellect, of nature, of study, of action, of love, and of usefulness, which He has poured forth around us. Let us only cast aside the false silly veils of prejudice and fashion, which ignorance has bound about our eyes; let us lay bare our souls to God's sunshine of truth and love; let us exercise the

> intelligence which He has bestowed on us upon worthy and noble objects, and this intelligence may become keen as that of men; and the paltry high heels and whalebone supports of mere drawing-room conventionality and young lady-hood withering up, we shall stand in humility before God, but proudly and rejoicingly at the side of man - different always, but not less noble, less richly endowed!
>
> All this we may do, without losing one jot or one title of our womanly spirit, but rather attain solely to these good, these blessed gifts, through a prayerful and earnest development of those germs of peculiar purity, of tenderest delicacy and refinement, with which our Heavenly Father has so especially endowed the women... Let such of us who have devoted ourselves to the study of an art... especially remember this, that the highest ideal in life as well as in art has ever been the blending of the beautiful and the tender with the strong and intellectual." 52

Such an exhortation from one woman to others was emulated by much critical opinion which, as the demand for art education for women became more insistent, and people realised that it was not going to go away, took to blaming the women themselves for their inadequate training and proof of want of study. Thus the Illustrated London News critic reviewing the Society of Female Artists show in 1861:

> "We speak of marked progress only, not of actual excellence, accomplished in the works before us - a progress indicative of good teaching in many cases, teaching, however, as yet incomplete, and considerable natural gifts in not a few other cases, gifts which, however, sometimes have been spoiled by bad teaching, and not infrequently indicate lack of teaching altogether. We hope all this will be taken kindly, as it is meant. The ladies are clever, very clever in this advancing - let us not say 'forward' - age but they must go through the ordinary process of training, if they would bring their cleverness into useful or distinguished employment." 53

Similarly, the Athenaeum in the same year:

"There is nothing attempted here which need prevent the scale of merit being raised higher than it is. If a lady will labour with a portion of the earnestness and industry a man must employ she might succeed as well in landscape or genre. On looking round, it is lamentable to notice the effects of idleness and dissipation of mind shown through the almost universal failure in rudimentary studies. Of 333 works there is not really a dozen showing a tolerable power of drawing, not thirty seem to have been commenced with any feeling of purpose beyond that involved in beginning a Berlin-wool slipper." 54

And the Art Student three years later:

"Signs of painting without models, and drawing without preliminary study, meet us at every turn. As a rule, the painting is in advance of the drawing, and the conception seems superior to the execution. We should advise the greater number of the lady-students here represented to go to their work in a more thoroughly earnest and work-like study, and never setting their palettes until thoroughly assured, not only that their drawings are true to nature, but that they grasp strongly, and realise vividly all the spirit, sentiment, and details of their subjects. It is not enough to stumble over some pretty sentiment, and rush at once to colours and canvas. The sentiment requires to be expressed not in the hasty words which first rise to the lips, but in words thoughtfully and artistically chosen to add force and beauty to its expression. The earliest idea of a subject should be to the picture what dawn is to day. Chronicle it in a sketch while the impulse is strong and the feeling warm, but think of it, dream of it, make it the subject of a hundred experimental studies before you finally embark in a work which may be the cornerstone of your future." 55

This line of criticism had a long life: thus the Art Journal on the Society's show of 1872, still on similar lines:

"Women are so apt to permit their quickness, their 'intuition' of mind and hand to become a stumbling-block, instead of a help to them;

> they can attain a certain level 'so easily', that they are tempted to refrain from scaling the heights beyond. With all due deference to those who hope to enlarge woman's capacity by keeping her a schoolgirl till her hair is grey, and sowing her mind so thickly with ologies and isms, that no crop has space to grow, we submit that what woman most lacks in Art, is the power to labour quietly, unassumingly, unremittingly... Ambition must take service under drudgery, and then the time will come when the mistress shall become the servant..." 56

In these complaints, reproaches, and insults, a lack of education is closely mingled with a lack of application or industry, and, indeed, a woman could easily be content with a low level of accomplishment, for which gallantry and condescension might praise her, since they expected nothing great of her anyway, giving her a false self-satisfaction,which some well-meaning critics were simply trying to shake her out of. This trivial excellence was dished out to women by such expressions as this piece from an article in the Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine of 1854, entitled "Suggestions for Drawing and Painting":

> "Drawing is not only ornamental, but useful. It is a great refiner of the mind, because, to draw well, you must read, study, and observe; it is an excellent companion at home or abroad; the only accomplishment which is not given up as age advances; for when a lady looks no longer well seated at her harp or piano, or amid the mazes of a giddy dance, she looks perfectly in her sphere, if we may so express ourselves, at her easel. Then what can equal it as an amusement for an invalid? It requires no exertion either of body or mind, and is noiseless also; therefore, while watching a sick friend, you can agreeably employ those moments which might otherwise appear very long and lonely; and, lastly, when you are numbered with the dead, your works remain behind, and often become treasures of no mean value." 57

Where Howitt and the author of "Sisters in Art", and some of the vehement critics represented above, were encouraging women to

ambition enough to move their art upwards, out of the domestic and private sphere, into a realm of generally recognised, not extenuating standards, this writer (and many others) is dignifying and elevating art within that sphere of the feminine, the lowly position of which in itself she, however, leaves untouched. [58] Such reformist efforts at boosting the confidence of women in their art were directly opposed by such as Howitt, whose works - like those of Bodichon and Boyce and other women well aware of the stigma of femaleness - testified to the higher level of ambition with which she was trying to imbue other women; whether other women saw her as an example is difficult to know, but she certainly meant to be one. Examples - in the sense of what are now called role models - were what women lacked in the 1850's, but what they could more and more perceive as the mid-century progressed. Bonheur, it has been said, was an example, as was later Thompson: "Instruction of a definite kind is necessary to bring out the powers of students of a less lofty spirit" wrote the author of "On the Education of the Artist" in the New Quarterly Review in 1861, "They require to have before their eyes living examples of success, and to be shown the course which will lead them to discrimination." [59] Echoing this with particular regard to women artists, the Art Journal critic in the review quoted above for its unsatisfaction with women's levels of achievement, affirmed:

> "It is highly to the credit of Mrs. Ward and Madame Jerichau (artists of the very highest and best established renown) that they exhibit here... They set a high standard, and a high standard is just what woman's work requires in every department of Art." 60

The high standard that counted, even at this period of argument and dissension as to the desirability and probity of the Royal Academy, was seen to be only attainable within academic circles; thus, the Royal Academy, in its misogynistic stance, was seen to be the main obstacle to women obtaining a meaningful art education. It is typical of the progress of women's struggle against the

obstacles arrayed against them in the world of art, that their entry into the Academy was finally effected at this time, when the Royal Academy's status was being visibly eroded and successfully challenged; likewise, women were not eventually allowed equally free use of the nude until the primacy of figure study in art was waning.[61] It is ironic, too, that once women had won the hard battle for permanently equal entry into the Academy schools, the Slade became established, offering an equivalent training even if it could not command the same prestige as the RA. All the contemporary institutions relevant to the education question will now be looked at.

In the middle of the century, art education could be had, by women, at a Government School of Design, especially the Female School (out of London, these schools were called branch or regional schools); at Cary's or Leigh's if one lived in or near London; by means of the old-fashioned drawing-master; and by various forms of self-help.[62] It was with the establishment in 1857 of the Society of Female Artists (see below, Chapter 3) that the inadequacies of these opportunities became all at once resoundingly obvious, because of the type and standard of the work displayed at the Society's exhibitions. Critical response to these first shows demonstrated this, but only the more perspicacious of reviewers, like the Art Journal critic, immediately linked the limitations of women's work with the education issue:.

> "... that which we see at the Egyptian Hall is the result of assiduous self-tuition, for we have no school for the instruction of ladies in painting from the living model. Labouring under such disadvantages as the female student does, we are not disappointed to see here so many drawings of flowers, fruit, and still-life objects - we are only surprised into exultation to see so much excellence in the higher departments of Art..." 63

A more forthright expression of the situation came from women themselves, in the pages of the Englishwoman's Review in the year

that saw the emergence of the Society of Female Artists:

> "Although every facility for realising both artistic excellence and professional success is gratuitously open to any young man who can produce as his qualification for claiming an elementary work of reasonable promise, no arrangement, unfortunately, is made in this country for extending them to women; and for want of such advantages the superior walks of imaginative art are rendered inaccessible, whilst that which is left within their reach is rendered doubly difficult of attainment. Nature, certainly, has not denied the elementary qualities of excellence; the fine and correct age; the delicate taste, feeling of character, refined and often picturesque imagination; the enthusiasm, poetry, love of art; the patience to overcome difficulties; the ambitious dreams that haunt genius yet unpractised, and brighten the hopes of a dim future. But the female aspirant who has these hopes and dreams must learn to suppress them, and chain down her aspirations to the limited class of literal matter-of-fact delineations left within her grasp. Portraiture, chiefly personal, varied occasionally by rustic and fancy figures, form the only resource of those whose powers aim at something beyond flowers, fruit, and landscape. The public sees nothing higher than this round of subjects, beautifully executed by the able feminine pencils whose productions grace our Exhibition walls, and it gets accustomed to consider female talent unequal to conceive anything higher and perform it as well. It forgets to ask why 'fair artists' are not afforded a chance of becoming also great artists, without the sacrifice of their feminine gifts; why the 'graceful pencil' is not disciplined to become a powerful pencil, without losing its grace?" 64

Here are implied both the assault on the Academy schools which was soon to burst forth and the patchy nature of the art education already available to women; the latter point should be further elaborated upon before the former is detailed.

It has been seen that a great proportion of women learned their art within the bounds of their own homes; the art-master who

visited the family home, was an established figure in middle-class families with daughters. The young ladies did not enter his world, but he came into theirs: thus their learning of art maintained a cosy, domestic and private character, far from the studio and the gallery. (This limited experience of what the attainment and practice of art really was like, in the world, was in sharp contrast to the situation of the French woman wanting to learn art, who could apprentice herself to a studio master, attending there for her tuition and probably going to study and copy at the Louvre, also, meeting other students in both locations,[65] (fig.44). Teaching young ladies to draw and sketch in the genteel and decorous privacy of their own homes, was an occupation which many tenderfoot male artists relied on for their living before fame could provide a better one; many young painters were only too glad to take young female pupils,[66] not only because they were abundant but also because the standards to which they were expected to aspire would be not too demanding of the young tutor's skills (themselves probably still developing). Stuart McDonald, in his useful History and Philosophy of Art Education (1970) writes of such a young man:

> "It was understood that his task was to help his middle-class charges to make presentable copies of landscapes, ruined abbeys, and castles, from engravings and lithographs; 'something for a wet half-holiday' as one master remarked";

and he quotes Thackeray on the same subject:

> "The tuition of ladies had been, and still was in 1850, the mainstay of the drawing masters. The chief purpose of this private art tuition, although many claims were made for it, was to occupy maidens' minds with a harmless pursuit." 67

It takes little imagination to see that this group - i.e. artists who taught amateurs - had a vested interest in keeping women's artistic ambitions at this low level, and discouraging them from

seeking formalised tuition in an establishment, whether that be Leigh's or the government school or the Academy.[68] Some men seem to have specialised in the young lady pupil or, later in the period, protegée, and such specialisation seems to have been dictated by their art having a special appeal for women. Thus, for instance, William Henry Hunt taught Barbara Bodichon, Anna Fitzjames, Helen Coleman (Angell); Henry Warren taught Madeline Marrable and Emily Macirone; Fred Cruikshank had pupils in Margaret Gillies and Grace Dixon,[69] (this is not to mention those who made no name for themselves after such instruction). Also specialising in the teaching of art to young ladies, and of particular interest here, were Samuel Rayner and Alexander Nasmyth; they are particularly interesting here, because their daughters helped and eventually took over the teaching in which they were engaged. For such families as the Rayners and Nasmyths, the young lady pupil was bread-and-butter. James Nasmyth, a son of Alexander and brother of Anne, Barbara, Charlotte, Jane, Elizabeth and Margaret, described in retrospect the circumstances under which the family art-teaching machine ran so well:

> "Edinburgh was at that time the resort of many Country families. The war raged abroad and prevented them going to the Continent. They therefore remained at home and the Scottish families for the most part took up their residences in Edinburgh. There were many young ladies desiring to complete their accomplishments and hence the establishment of my sisters' art class. It was held in the large painting room of the upper part of the house... It soon became one of the most successful institutions in Edinburgh." 70

This was at the beginning of the century, but the sisters moved south to London in the mid-century and re-established themselves in the English capital. The sisters made individual reputations for themselves as painters of landscape (figs. 45/7)(although within a family formula in which their father and their other brother Patrick also worked) but the extent to which Anne, Jane, Barbara, Charlotte, Elizabeth and Margaret were very much part

of the family firm, can be told from the following description of them by W. Graham Robertson:

> "All the sisters had painted diligently and inevitably. They were all talented, but it would have made no difference had they not been so. They were Nasmyths and therefore they painted: what is more, they painted all day long. Day in, day out, the four sisters sat solemnly down together and painted...." 71

For the Rayner sisters - Louise, Rose, Margaret, Frances and Nancy - the balance between being teachers and being artists was weighed slightly more on the other side from the Nasmyths, that is to say, on the artist side (figs. 48/9), but the teaching of young ladies formed a major part of their art activity: Rose, for instance, was described by Clayton in 1876 as having withdrawn from exhibition, "her time being fully occupied in teaching." [72]

The woman teaching young women to draw was, however, a comparatively rare creature, because she, by and large, had not the ability, self-confidence, nor credibility which her male rival in procuring pupils would command. However, she had the advantage over him of being seen as no moral risk, in Queen Victoria's pre-Freudian society, by virtue of her being the same sex as her pupil. This being so, however, when women did act the drawing-master, their pupils seem to have invariably been female[73]; one can ascribe to social prejudice the reasons for this one-way traffic.

Tuition in art beyond the home circle could be found in several places: three private art schools in London trained students up to Academy entry level. There were Sass's (later Cary's) and Leigh's (later Heatherly's)[74] and Parris'. The first had instructed women since its inception (c.1810) and the second from shortly after its commencement in 1845 (it had grown out of Dickenson's school, which had held drawing-classes specifically for women during the day-times): the significance of these two study-places was their free use of the live model, study of which was of prime

importance to a person who wished to become proficient enough to gain entry to the Academy schools. Parris's was an institution established in 1834 by E.T. Parris and known as "The historical society"; the significance of this set-up, a later writer observed, was that it offered "education of female artists in large classes, taught on pecuniary terms within the means of comparatively poor students."[75] All these establishments, however, were seen as preparatory to entry into the Academy schools, and, since women were not taken into these Schools until 1861, before that time their usefulness for women was limited. It is indicative of how valuable to women were these private schools, that most of the women who achieved any note in the '60's seem to have started out at one of these schools if they had been seeking training before 1861 (when women began to enter the Academy). Such included Margaret Tekusch ("her studies were conducted entirely at Cary's Academy")[76], Ward, Howitt, Turck (who all attended Cary's and Leigh's), Laura Herford (who was the first female student at the Royal Academy), Louisa Gann (who became mistress of the government Female School), Jopling (at Leigh's in the '50's), Elizabeth Collingridge (who was at Leigh's when it had become Heatherly's), and Corbaux, Sarah Setchell, Carpenter, and Gillies (who attended Parris's, according to Jeaffreson writing in 1870).[77]

A woman who was more adventurous, moneyed or lucky in family and circumstances, might go abroad to study. Such a move, if not occasioned by family business, marriage or death, must have indicated in the 1850's an already strong conviction in her art, for it was not until the '70's and '80's that it became less than unusual for a young woman to go abroad to study art,[78] although individual women did take this line of training more often than public opinion realised. Howitt's example has already been mentioned, and was prominent because recorded by her book.[79] Other women taking a similarly bold step before the middle of the century included Mary (Francis) Thornycroft, who went to Rome to study under the sculptor John Gibson; Elizabeth Murray (née Heaphy) who had studied in Rome also; and Susan Durant, who learned

sculpture in Paris under Baron Triqueti. More women followed their example in the '50's: Gillies was in Ary Scheffer's studio in 1851; Mary Severn was taught by the same artist in the early '50's; Boyce spent six months in the studio of Thomas Couture in 1855; Turck studied in Antwerp in the latter part of the decade. There was another wave in the early '60's, despite the amelioration of the art education in this country, which included Benham Hay going to Italy (having already been to Munich with Howitt), Jopling going to Paris, Maud Naftel going to Paris, Henrietta Montalba going to Venice, Clara Montalba going to Paris, and Elizabeth Thompson going to Italy. The tutors under whom these women worked, varied enormously in prestige and worth: some artists were known, as in England, for specialising in female pupils (Chaplin and Cogniet, for instance), some artists might be particularly admired by their would-be pupils: Howitt is an example of this latter process, while Boyce intended to ask Bonheur to take her as a pupil. It should be borne in mind that, although the intention in going abroad to study was to obtain training which could not be got in Britain, there was an element of spurious prestige attached to taking a period of study abroad, by which a young women might find herself training under a mediocre French painter in the provinces so that it could be said she had studied abroad.

That this trend, begun out of deprivation, continued as a positive move recognised as valuable even when art education had been domestically improved, can be seen by the amount and nature of the comment on it which the press of the '70's and early '80's shows. In 1872, the magazine Woman carried a two-part article on "Free art-education for Women in France" [80]; while in an Art Journal article on "Art and Artists in Munich" in January 1872, Osborn's presence in the foreign city was mentioned, but not seen as remarkable [81]; in 1877, the Englishwoman's Review reported on "New Art Schools on the Continent" [82], and the less partial Art Journal noted that a hostel had been established for lady students in Rome, saying:

> "Those who have resided for any length of time in that city must have seen the privations so often endured by our young countrywomen in their endeavour to render themselves fit for the position of professional artists. It is of little use to say that instruction can be procured in London superior to that of any continental city, though that may, to a certain extent, be true; yet the longing felt by all who are inspired by a love of Art, to work and study beneath the sunny skies of Italy, is not to be eradicated. Common sense arguments are of little avail in a struggle against such enthusiasm as this: and we could scarcely wish it otherwise, for the education indirectly gained in scenes so full of human interest and Art associations is one peculiarly fitted to develop the artistic nature." 83

Such writing indicates recognition of a practice which had its beginning in the isolated pioneers of the middle of the century.

It was a pioneer who, in 1861, managed to force open the doors of the Royal Academy Schools to women. Leading up to that, women orchestrated a vigorous campaign to force the reluctant Academy's hand. In March 1859, a letter appeared in the columns of the Athenaeum in an article that was reporting the progress of the re-organisation of the Academy then afoot, from "a Lady" signing herself A.R. [84] It referred to a recent speech by Lord Lynhurst:

> "After an interesting sketch of the history and objects of the institution, his Lordship says: 'The schools are on the most liberal establishment. Any of Her Majesty's subjects have a right to be gratuitously instructed there. Nothing more is requisite for that purpose than the production of a certificate of good moral character and of a qualification in drawing.' Perhaps Lord Lyndhurst and many of your readers may not be aware, that a large class of 'Her Majesty's subjects', namely, those of her own sex, are totally excluded from the gratuitous instruction he justly estimates as so valuable; and are, therefore, obliged to pay at a high rate for such instruction as they can obtain for money - not the best - or altogether lack the systematic, directed study, which alone can enable a student to take a fair position in his (sic!) profession. Instead of enjoying the opportunity of working for years under the

> supervision of our most eminent masters, women are left to struggle unaided through the difficulties and discouragements, which only artists can fully appreciate. Unless women are supposed capable of attaining by their talents alone as much as men with talent and years of instructed study can accomplish, it is difficult to conceive on what principle all the advantages of a national institution such as the Academy should be given to the one sex, and denied to the other. The works exhibited at the Ladies' Exhibition afford such sufficient proof of their great need of the thorough training which only the Academy gives gratuitously, and any but gratuitous instruction is of little use to the professional artist. There is no practical reason why the Royal Academy should not include a room for female students, under the same regulations as the men's school. This is already the case in the various private Academies, as well as in the Government Schools of Design; and I feel convinced that the hardship and disadvantages of the present exclusion of women, only require to be clearly appreciated, to induce those who have the power, to remedy a real injustice. Women will paint, and their painting better will be a benefit to the public as well as to themselves." 85

The following month, the Athenaeum published the following equally exhaustive letter on the topic, which had, apparently, been sent to every Academician:

> "Sir - we appeal to you to use your influence, as an artist and a member of the Royal Academy, in favour of a proposal to open the Schools of that institution to women. We request your attentive consideration of the reasons which have originated this proposal. When the Academy was established in 1769, women artists were rare; no provision was therefore required for their Art-education. Since that time, however, the general advance of education and liberal opinions has produced a great change in this particular; no less than one hundred and twenty ladies have exhibited their works in the Royal Academy alone, during the last three years, and the profession must be considered as fairly open to women. (86) It thus becomes of the greatest importance that they should have the best means of study placed within their reach;

especially that they should be enabled to gain a thorough knowledge of Drawing in all its branches, for it is in this quality that their works are invariably found deficient. It is generally acknowledged that study from the Antique and from Nature, under the direction of qualified masters, forms the best education for the artist; this education is given in the Royal Academy to young men, and it is given gratuitously. The difficulty and expense of obtaining good instruction oblige many women artists to enter upon their profession without adequate preparatory study, and thus prevent their attaining the position for which their talents might qualify them. It is in order to remove this great disadvantage, that we ask the members of the Royal Academy to provide accommodation in their Schools for properly qualified Female Students, and we feel assured that the gentlemen composing that body will not grudge the expenditure required to afford to women artists the same opportunities as far as practicable by which they themselves so greatly profited." 87

There were 38 signatories to this memorial, forming an array of the female art talent of the time; already familiar to Athenaeum readers would have been Anna Jameson, Margaret Gillies, M.D. Mutrie, A.F. Mutrie, Emma S. Oliver (Mrs. William Oliver), A. Bartholomew (Mrs. Valentine Bartholomew), Eliza Sharpe, Mary Ann Sharpe, Mary Thornycroft; while up and coming names on the list included Henrietta Ward, Anna Blunden, Eliza F. Bridell (late Fox), Florence Claxton, E. Osborn, Margaret Robbinson, R. Solomon. Also there were names which, like Jameson's, were to become known as something else than practising artists: S. Ellen Blackwell (sister of the pioneering doctor Elizabeth Blackwell), B.L.S. Bodichon, Ellen Clayton, Louisa Gann (see below for more mention of her), Laura Herford (who, soon afterwards, became the Academy Schools' first female student), Eliza Dundas Murray (first secretary of the Society of Female Artists), Bella Leigh Smith (sister to Barbara). The remainder were names which could be found by the discerning exhibition-goer in the catalogues of London exhibitions in the '50's and '60's: J.K. Barclay, Naomi Burrell, M. Burrows, F. Greata, Charlotte Hardcastle, Caroline

Hullah, Elizabeth Hunter, Charlotte James, F. Jolly, R. le Breton, R. Levison, Emma Novello, Emily Sarjent, Sophia Sinnett, M. Tekusch.[88]

In the same year, Anna Jameson published Sisters of Charity and the Communion of Labour,[89] with a preface wherein she addressed herself forcefully to this same question (it was at this point in time that the iron was hot, because it was at that time being debated when and in what form the Academy's new accommodation, necessitated by the expansion of the National Gallery, would be accomplished):

> "... the question now before the public is, whether, in the new edifice to be erected by the Royal Academy of Art on land granted by the Government, it may not be found advisable to include a female school of art? A doubt exists whether the original character of the Academy did or did not include lady-students, but gentlemen, we might presume, would give them the benefit of the doubt, and naturally take the chivalrous and the generous side of the question... But it is not pleaded, I believe, even by those most against us, that women were intentionally or absolutely excluded; the more especially that among the original academicians, in 1769, there were 3 ladies.[90] The accomplished and courteous President of the Academy, in his letter to Lord Lyndhurst, does not plead that women are inadmissible to the privilege of gratuitous instruction extended to students of the other sex, but that the institution is too poor to afford it, and that the present outlay for schools is as much as the funds of the Academy can meet. A small share of the advantages from the present outlay is all that women ask, as a recognition of the principle of justice and equality..." [91]

The artistic press took up the issue with no hesitation: in reviewing the Academy exhibition that year, the Art Journal critic commented, of Margaret Carpenter's works: "(these works) will go farther than a volume of arguments to compel the Royal Academy to acknowledge the 'rights of women' which they have been always disposed to ignore."[92]

The reasons for this 'ignorance' were not defensible with a professional rationale, but, even so, the Academy's chauvinism was defended by ingenious apologists. Jameson suggested one defence that had already been made - J. Cordy Jeaffreson suggested another ten years later:

> "... the original Academicians never contemplated the exclusion of women from their associations, or thought of framing any law that would debar female students from an equal participation with men in the privileges and benefits which the Academy was designed to confer on learners of art. From the first institution of the Academy until the present time, women have been no less eligible than men for election to the Associate's degree and the Academician's higher rank; and female students, no less than male, have enjoyed a theoretical right to the advantages of academic instruction. But until quite a recent date custom shut out women from the Academy's school as completely as any illiberal rule, penned with a view to their exclusion, could have done... Opened as a school for males, because none of the other sex put in a claim for admission, the Academy's school continued to be the resort of none but masculine learners, until usage created an erroneous impression that the seminary had been instituted for the special benefit of our sex. And thus the case remained until 1860..." 93

The issue was forced the year after the women's petition, by one of its signatories, Laura Herford, gaining entry to the Schools by submitting work anonymously to the usual entrance examination. The Englishwoman's Review's obituary notice of the artist recalled:

> "... what was needed was that a lady should send in a drawing as a candidate, and thus get the question fairly brought before the Council for decisior. This Miss Herford did, and the question was discussed and ultimately decided in her favour, and she duly entered upon her seven years' studentship." 94

A rather less sympathetic account of the business was given retrospectively by G.D. Leslie in his recollections The Inner Life of the RA (1914); he referred to the "invasion of the school by

the ladies", writing:

> "The invasion was artfully planned. In 1860 one female was passed into the establishment by an entirely unsuspecting Council; she had sent in her drawings with her Christian names in initials only. It was a good enough drawing. The laws were searched, nothing was found in them prohibitory to the admission of females, and so she took her place amongst the boys. The drawing she made as a probationer was quite good, and in due course she received her ivory ticket with a copy of the laws and took her seat in the School as a Royal Academy student. Two or three more soon followed, and the number of female students kept increasing." 95

Not all Academy men were as unwelcoming to the new breed of student as was Leslie: each student had to be recommended by a proposer when endeavouring to enter the Academy Schools, and it can be seen from the records that some men in the art world, academicians and others, consistently supported female entry, noticeably William Frith, Edward Poynter, Richard Westmacott and Abraham Cooper. The most frequently occurring names on the list of sponsors, however, are those of men under whom the women trained: thus, Cary's and Heatherly's names recur, as do those of Richard Burchett and John Sparkes, respectively director at South Kensington in the '60's and head of the Lambeth school. [96]
As to the significance of the new breed of student, this was remarked upon in various ways, according to the preoccupations of the writer or speaker. This was the unenthusiastic verdict given on the innovation by the Athenaeum's 'W': it introduces an argument against women's presence in the Schools which was often trundled out when, during the mid-century, women's participation in many male-dominated fields was being contemplated for the first time:

> "It is due to the Royal Academy to say that of late considerable improvements in the method of conducting the schools have been introduced. The last and most astonishing innovation is the entry of lady-students - a matter that requires careful watching, lest the Antique

> School become a mere place for flirtation and gossip - vices rampart at the Gallery of Modern Pictures, South Kensington, and not unknown in the establishment next door to the Royal Academy. A curator has within the last ten years been placed in the schools for keeping order and affording instruction, whose presence, if it is a check upon the lively demonstrations of a set of youngsters, - not always, we think, widely checked, - insures silence and propriety of conduct. Without some surveillance the schools, with the female pupils, would soon become as notorious for idleness and flirting as the National Gallery at South Kensington is." 97

Jameson had already poured scorn on this form of anti-woman feeling, in her piece in Sisters of Charity and the Communion of Labour two years before:

> "When the National School of Design was opened to female students, it met with the strongest opposition, and, strange to say, the principal objection was on the score of morality; - one would have thought that all London was to be demoralised because a certain number of ladies and a certain number of gentlemen had met under the same roof for the study of art... it was argued that pupils might perhaps meet on the stairs, and then, when going home, who was to protect the young ladies from the young gentlemen? You, my lord, may have forgotten some of the disgraceful absurdities which gentlemen and artists were not ashamed to utter publicly and privately on that occasion; - I blush to recall them; - I trust we have done with them..." 98

The morality argument, though, found a new lease of life in the matter of women studying from the life model: this practice was a fundamentally important part of the Academy's training, had been Leigh's great attraction to students, and was acknowledged by Edward Poynter, at the opening of the Slade school in 1871, as still being basic to a sound art education: he talked of "complete study of the model", "for the want of which no amount of study of the antique, of books, or of anatomy, will compensate", three years later explaining that "the study of the nude figure

holds a principal, indeed almost an exclusive, place in this School...(for) to draw the nude figure well will enable the artist to draw anything...". [99] It was in an article on the Slade school, in the magazine Woman, that one Mabel Keningale Cook demonstrated that, still in 1872, the presence of a live nude model among a mixed company of males and females was a cause for moral anxiety:

> "The mixed class is much the largest at present, numbering from thirty to forty. It is very hard-working and studious, and shows at last that it is quite possible for young men and women to work together from an almost nude model in perfect quiet and propriety. It is to be hoped that no young ladies will come in to disturb the atmosphere, and introduce any flirtational frivolity. Male and female students will never find any difficulty in working together, because their aim is too high and their art too sacred for them to think of false proprieties or social conventionalities by the way... The responsibility of course lies principally with the ladies. If they work in earnest, looking neither to the right or to the left, they will never meet with annoyance, and will gradually form around them a pure, straightforward atmosphere." 101 (fig.23)

But for the Academy, in 1861, it was hardly a question of an "almost nude model". The Council resolved, at the end of 1861 (meeting of December 18th):

> "On the question of admitting Female Students to the School of the living model, it was resolved that the qualification which is deemed sufficient to admit a Student to draw from the life, shall be deemed sufficient to admit a Female Student to draw from the living draped model." 102

Giving the hierarchy of genres, this put women at an immense disadvantage, of course, and women had attempted to fill the gap which conventional notions of propriety left in their art knowledge, for themselves, before now. Clayton reported in 1876 that Bridell-

Fox had, in the late '40's,

> "started an evening class for ladies, conducted on co-operative principles, for the practice of drawing from life - the model being undraped; female students having experienced in full bitterness the difficulty of thoroughly studying the human figure concealed by its habilments. This class Miss Fox commenced for her own practice and benefit as much as for that of others, and the first year she shared with the rest of the class the needful expenses, her father kindly lending a large room - his library - for the meetings. In this class Miss Fox did not profess to give instruction, and it was attended at different times by several of our best lady artists, who, like herself, felt the necessity for this kind of practice." 103

Fox was also prominent in the Society of Female Artists' attempts to furnish this lack, when in 1863 it started a class for the costumed model, which the following year became a class for study from the model, tout court. (This move was probably prompted by the shutdown on women at the RA schools.) In 1867, the Art Journal reported that this class was under the tutelage of Fox and Cave Thomas. Other women, it can be seen from the evidence of sketchbooks and memoirs, tried to content themselves with copying nude statues and paintings of the nude, or with the inadequacies of the draped figure, (fig.50). It is a moot question whether it was not to a large extent from knowledge of the inaccessibility of study from the nude that many women made a subject choice which kept them within the bounds of nature and still-life painting; they could gaze unrestrictedly at fruit, flowers, and scenery, in a way that they could absolutely not, in conventional terms, at human bodies. It showed, too, when women did attempt the figure in their work, that they had not had or done their share of such gazing; although talent could sometimes take them further than Wordsworthian sentiment:

> "... there is certainly a greater proficiency among the figure painters than among those ladies professing landscape painting; but

with regard to the former it must be observed that the studies are principally directed to the head; and the lower extremities wherein lie the real difficulties of the drawing, are neglected." 104 (Perforce, surely!)

"The men have glossy hair, and bodies that set anatomical laws at glorious and superb defiance"... 105

> "... the figures are without bones and substance, mere shadowy forms that cast no shadows. As sketches they may pass, although the faces and hands are generally finished like miniatures, but still we can see that very little has been done from nature - the suggestion is from the life, but not the work." 106

However, it was not to be until 1893 that the Academy consented to display the nude model to its female students, and even then with fundamental qualifications: "It shall be optional for Visitors in the Painting School to set the male model undraped, except about the loins, to the class of Female Students." 107

The problematic ramifications of women's entry into the RA schools did not, however, predominate among those who commented on the matter: more saw the move as positive, when it was first made, at least. The Illustrated London News' gossip column 'Town and Table Talk' saw the widely beneficial results of the innovation:

> "The Royal Academicians... are about to rescind the stupid and barbarous rule which has hitherto banished female students from its schools. It were time to abrogate this silly Salic law when we remember that Mary Moser and Angelika Kauffmann were among the earliest affiliated to George III's pet scheme. It has been lately discovered that the very best of the competition drawings sent in to the Academy were the work of female hands; and, judging from what the ladies have done in their own exhibition, as well as at South Kensington, and in the provincial schools of design, we feel inclined to augur the most gratifying results from their admission to the Academy drawing schools. We should have far fewer pinched and pining governesses, and rarer despairing

> outcries for 'employment for women', if greater and more generous facilities were afforded for the development of the artistic faculties of the better sex." 108

Academic resistance to equal opportunity for women remained influential, however, and a few years later, the door which had been thrown open by Herford's admission - and which, apologists for the Academy maintained, had never, in fact, been locked - was effectively shut, for in the Minutes of the Academy's Council meeting for May 14, 1863, one reads: "It was moved by Mr. Webster, seconded by Mr. Pickersgill and resolved unanimously, that no more Female Students to be admitted to the Academy at present." [109] Thus, the records of female Academy students for the first decade after Herford's trail-blazing, read as follows: 1860,1; 1861,4; 1862,5; 1863,3; 1864,0; 1865,0; 1866,0; 1867,0; 1868,3; 1869,6; 1870,13. [110]

The reason given for the clamp-down - given only when the Academy's decision was widely publicly challenged - was lack of space (and, presumably, what would now be termed a 'last in, first out' process). This is evidently not truly the reason, for in the years immediately following the move to re-ban women, the student intake - now exclusively male once more - was markedly no smaller than in the years immediately preceding 1863. [111] In any case, as female students were to imply in their memorial asking for the ruling to be revoked, submitted to the Council that same year, such prosaic practicalities should not be the determining factors in a question where principles were clearly involved and a higher practicality could easily be appealed to:

> "... the current of opinion and feeling of late years, on the part of the educated public, has been strongly in favour of the introduction of women to such callings and pursuits as are, or seem to be, suitable to their sex, capacities, and tastes, although the same may have been previously for the most part, or altogether, monopolized by men. That one channel which has

> in modern times been opened for the enterprise of women, is the pursuit of the Arts of Sculpture and Painting, and that many women have availed themselves of that opening and are at present earning their livlihood as Artists; and many other young women are preparing themselves by study and practice to follow their example. That your memorialists merely ask your attention to the fact, that many young women are now devoting their lives to that profession; and since this is so, your memorialists trust that it will be readily conceded that it is desirable that they should become <u>good</u> artists rather than <u>inferior</u> artists, and that they should, with that view, receive the best Art education compatible with their circumstances." 112

The ban of 1863 could be seen quite easily as further evidence of that churlish chauvinism which had kept women from the Academy Schools for so long before 1860. Thus the <u>Art Journal</u> in November following the ban of June 1863:

> "We learn with much regret that the Council of the Royal Academy have refused to admit ladies as students in the schools. This resolution can be defended on no grounds whatever, but is discreditable to the members equally as artists and as gentlemen. Moreover, a very large number of the most attractive works in the exhibitions are the productions of ladies: we need mention only those of Mrs. Ward, Miss Osborn, Miss Solomon, and the Misses Mutrie. (113) Art is not the only profession in which women have of late years achieved distinction: and to exclude them from the means of attaining it by help of the Royal Academy is equally irrational and unbecoming. When the Academy has been reformed, and wisdom pervades over its councils, women will not only be received there as students but as members. Members of the Royal Academy women have been, and will be again." 114

By its ban of 1863, the Academy aggravated parts of the art press which were pro-women (and perhaps for other reasons anti-Academy) such that now a move to press for membership of the Academy itself, not just its Schools, started up. Already in 1862, the

Times critic had remarked, in reviewing the Academy exhibition:

> "... These ladies should not allow the Academicians to forget that in the first list of the Royal Academy were included Angelika Kaufmann and Mary Moser. In power of painting the works of the former have been as much surpassed by any of the three ladies we have mentioned (and Miss Osborn's name might have been added to theirs) as Mary Moser's flowers are thrown into the shade by those of the two Misses Mutrie. If the Academy were accessible to appeal, the claims of the ladies might most fairly be pressed upon them..." 115

Although the intemperate ban on women students was lifted in March 1867 so much as to allow the number of women present in the Schools to remain constant, and was revoked completely two months after that, the itch for entry also into the Academy itself had started, and would be scratched until it was alleviated: in 1866 the Times critic returned to the fray, in his Academy review:

> "With Mrs. Ward, Miss Edwards, Miss Osborn, Miss Swift, the Misses Mutrie, Mme. Jerichau, Miss Wells, Miss Martineau, Miss Blunden, Mrs. Robbinson, and Miss Dundas among the painters here - to say nothing of such exhibitors in the French Gallery at Pall Mall as Rosa Bonheur and Henriette Browne - and Miss Durant, Mrs. Thornycroft, Mrs. D.O. Hill, Mme. Ney and the Duchess of Castiglione Colonna among the sculptors, it is time that the Royal Academy should be reminded that its original list included Mary Moser and Angelika Kauffmann. It is much to be hoped that in the proposed extension of the Associate class the ladies will not be forgotten." 116

But forgotten they were, ultimately, though membership for women was, in fact, proposed during the course of the reforms of the Academy called for by the Government Commission of 1863. The proposer was Roberton Blaine, whose wife was one of the mainstays of the Society of Female Artists. The relevant minutes read thus:

Qu.2850: Will you explain what alteration you would think desirable?

I would admit ladies, both as Associates and as Royal Academicians. The original laws clearly contemplated their admission. There have been instances of two or three ladies who have been RA's. - Angelika Kauffmann and Mrs. Moser were original members.

Qu.2851: That is a feature which you think it desirable to revive?

It is only just to do so. I think it is quite clear that they ought to be admitted, both as Associates and as RA's. I would allow them to vote, but it would be unfitting that they should be members of the council.

Qu.2852: Is there any female artist at present, in your opinion, fit to be elected a member of the Academy?

I need only name one - Mrs. Carpenter... 117

This was in March: in May, the subject came up again, this time in the testimony of J.C. Robinson:

(Qu.4511) ... I think, moreover, the Academy would gain strength by admitting a certain number of honorary English members.... and I do not see why lady artists and writers on art should not at least be eligible for honorary diplomas. Angelika Kauffmann was a lady Academician with full rights; surely we have lady artists now who are at least her equals. In a social point of view it seems to me most desirable to hold out every encouragement for the adoption of art as a profession for females. I do not, however, think that the honorary members should have any power to interfere in the practical management of the Academy...." 118

But, needless to say, among the reforms taken on by the Academy after the Committee, the admission of women to membership was not one. Neither were they specifically admitted for Associateship in the extension of that class proposed in 1866. So: "Where, then, is the woman who is entitled to put those coveted letters of RA after her name?" asked a letter published in the Examiner in March 1871:

> "though the Royal Academy was established for the admission of female as well as male artists among the forty members; and everyone will knows the money value (to mention no others) of the magic letters. Surely it is not contended that no woman can or does paint better than the lowest of the RA's. Not to mention such honoured names as those of Madame Bodichon, Miss Osborne, Miss Mutrie, and, there are members whose pictures compare well if they do not even contrast advantageously, with some present RA's and many late ones, notably Chalons and others one could point out, were it not invidious to mention names... until more recognition is given them as artists, I think it well they (women) should have a separate Exhibition..." 119

That scratching for recognition, however, persisted in women being, in fact, nominated in Academy elections despite the fact that they were not, strictly speaking, eligible. Henrietta Ward was proposed for Associateship in 1875 and in 1876, receiving two votes on the first occasion and one vote on the second. Martha Mutrie was proposed for Associateship in 1868, receiving one vote, and again in 1869 with the same result. But the woman who came nearest to overturning the Academy's obstinacy, by default, as it would have been, was Elizabeth Thompson, who was proposed in 1879 in two elections for Associate and was only beaten by two votes after a third ballot. The next year she was again proposed for Associateship, gaining three votes. The year after that, she was proposed on three more occasions.[120] She recollected in her autobiography that already in 1875, there had been a suggestion that she might be elected, that both Millais and Henry Cole made allusions to that possibility.[121] Louise Jopling, a looker-on in this matter who had her own interest in the outcome of such a rumour, also recalled the question in her autobiography:

> "Elizabeth Thompson was very nearly elected a member of the RA, after this success ("The Roll Call" of 1874), and I heard that it was chiefly the determined opposition of Sir John Gilbert, RA, that prevented her being elected. Sir John is credited with declaring that he didn't "Want any women in"... Miss Thompson's

> election was such a close shave, however, that a law was passed that, if women were elected, the right to go to the Annual Dinner was to be denied to them!" 122

If it is reflected upon that the number of Associates went up, in the latter '70's, by leaps and bounds - unlimited numbers were proposed in 1866, but in 1875 it was suggested, specifically, that there should be an increase of twelve, but this was rejected and in 1876 four new Associates were proposed with an accompanying suggestion that the total should reach thirty within the next two years - then it does seem nothing but obstinate of the Academy.[123] Ellen Clayton was moved by anger to remark upon the shilly-shallying and pigheadedness in 1876:

> "It cannot be denied that since the days of Angelika Kauffmann and Mary Moser, and the female honorary members of the same period, (124) the Academy has studiously ignored the existence of women artists, leaving them to work in the cold shade of utter neglect. Not even once has a helping hand been extended, not once has the most trifling reward been given for highest merit and industry... In other countries, women have the prizes fairly earned quietly placed in their hands, and can receive them with dignity. In free, unprejudiced, chivalric England, where the race is said to be to the swift, the battle to the strong, without fear or favour, it is only by slow, laborious degrees that women are winning the right to enter the lists at all, and are then viewed with half contemptuous indulgence." 125

The question seemed to be at last resolved, in 1879, when the Council of the Academy, in a patently face-saving piece of expediency, declared that the original intention had been to disallow women - it quoted the wording of the original Instrument, "Men of fair moral character..." - but simultaneously it passed a resolution admitting women to the RAship "without privileges."[126] This meant that thenceforward the onus for success within the Academy could be put onto women, and the RA disclaim any

responsibility for prejudicing the liklihood or possibility of such success. Thus William Frith in 1887:

> "Whether we shall have female Academicians or not depends upon the ladies themselves; all the honours the Academy can bestow are open to them, from the lowly seat of the Associate to the Presidential chair. A female President is not impossible... I most sincerely hope that we have amongst us young mistresses in the art of painting that future ages may see fit to rank amongst the old masters." 127

It was not as if women had not shown themselves to be capable of reaching the standard which the Academy set: Louisa Starr had won the Gold Medal in 1867 for her painting "David before Saul", (fig. 51), and Jessie McGregor won the same honour in 1872, [128] (fig. 52). That this level of performance threatened to be the rule rather than the exception, is indicated by the fact that Jopling - ever the eager relayer of news - wrote to her son in 1880: "Did I tell you that they talk of limiting the number of female students at the Royal Academy, because they carry off all the prizes from the young men!!!" [129] At the time of Starr's success, Sir Francis Grant, awarding credit where it was due, opined:

> "I think this is a very serious consideration for us men who call ourselves the lords of creation. We may well tremble in our shoes when we see this great "storm wave" of female talent and enterprise rolling rapidly forward and threatening to overwhelm us." 130

One must beware, of course, as concerned people were at the time, of the standard for judging women's work being lower than that for men's, and of the possibility of women being praised simply because they had outstripped the expected range of their achievements, on Dr. Johnson's dancing dog principle. [131] Even so, it was very clear at this point, and became more and more so, that with the securing of academic art education (albeit still differentiated from that open to men), the position of women

artists had reached a 'new high', the symbolic significance of their admission onto Academy ground giving almost as much of a fillip to their prospects of success as the actual facilities which this admission offered.

Art education for women provided by the state was of a very different order from the training which the Academy thought to offer its students. Female students were admitted, under varying circumstances, in the regional schools, and there was set up in 1842/3 a special Female School of Design (sometimes called the Female School of Art, sometimes more prudently the Female School). Like the branch schools, the Female School was posited on a notion of art applied to manufacture, rather than art as an end in itself; a paper issued by the School's Committee of Management, quoted by F.D. Maurice in 1860 in Macmillan's Magazine, states the objects of the establishment to be "I. Partly to enable Young Women of the Middle Class to obtain an honourable and profitable employment; II. Partly to improve Ornamental Design in Manufactures by cultivating the taste of the Designer." [132] It takes little imagination to see that women were admitted to schools of the applied arts (in the face of the 'redundancy' of women) when they were not to a school of fine art, because the former, in their less elevated character, were seen to be acceptable ground for women to work, where the truly creative and inspirational area of the latter was seen to be out of bounds for women. The particular aims and achievements of branch schools, with respect to this ethos, might vary, depending on the economic and class character of its locality and the enterprise or bias of its head. Thus, for instance, at the Manchester school:

> "The School of Design at Manchester is based on the same views of public utility as the School of Lyons, teaching the principles of design as applicable to all industrial art, and laying a solid foundation of instruction for those who may decide upon the pursuit of higher Arts thereafter." [133]

In practice, therefore, Government Schools could easily be seen as a training ground for the fine arts or as a makeshift for those who were insufficiently gifted for the fine arts, or, even, as a shortcut to the fine arts - obviously, for women, barred from the Academy until 1861, this latter interpretation of the Government Schools' function was particularly attractive. This caused a lot of inconvenience, confusion and embarrassment to the Schools and their Committee for, in fact, the Government School was quite a different establishment from the Academy Schools, animated by quite a different spirit, by and large, intending its students to become producers of the beautifully useful, not creators of the inspiringly beautiful. Women were welcome on the former premise, but a nuisance on the latter, and while the former was seen to be acceptably within women's capabilities, their aspiration to the latter was considered presumptuously misplaced. As Quentin Bell writes, in his useful history of the Government Schools, "Everywhere, in fact, there were ladies who were longing to 'take up art' and who at once invaded the classes intended for those females who were expected to do ornamental work in light industry." [134] The Art Journal, in an article called "Art-Work for Women" in 1872, asserts that such work was all that a woman could look to the Government Schools for:

> "In our consideration of Art-Work for woman, we find ourselves practically restricted to Industrial or Mechanical Art, where talent rather than genius finds its scope. To high genius it is impossible to assign any limit, or fix any bounds, since genius is only another name for a motive-power, in its very nature transcending all artificial limitations. Genius in woman, as in man, may safely be left to find its own work and fix its own sphere of action." 135

The fact that male genius was not, however, left to its own devices, but was nourished by the Royal Academy, leads irresistibly to the conclusion that the Industrial and Mechanical were all that were being considered for women, because women were

assumed to be very unlikely to display any genius: in the seemingly endless discussion of the government schools' relation to women, there is much talk of what was suitable, fitting and proper for women's artistic destiny - which, with their connotations of a pre-determined pattern, contrast with notions of genius, with its connotations of a self-regulating and self-defining spirit which will not be bound. It is patently clear that the Government Schools did not set themselves up to produce or even encourage those difficult beings, geniuses; they were interested in a much more functional creature, the art-worker.[136] The sort of student that was envisaged as the suitable type for the Female School to make into such a product, is conjured up by an advertisement for entry into the School in 1853:

> "The following new rules have recently been sanctioned by the Board of Trade for the management of the Metropolitan Female School at 37, Gower Street - Students before entering the Elementary School must be able to draw the copies of the letters A,O and S, which may be obtained at the school; and they must also have a knowledge of the names of certain geometrical forms which are contained in a text-book of definitions of practical geometry, to be obtained at the Female School, - and no student will be admitted without examination on such a book. Every student desirous of entering the upper school must make drawings from the most advanced examples in the elementary school, and have a knowledge of the elementary laws of colour: - a text-book of the laws of colour may be obtained at the school, on which every applicant for admission to the upper school will be examined." 137

The education implied by such a manifesto is certainly more of the technical than the creative kind, concerned more with reproductive and mechanical skills than with inspired and independent ones.

The history of the Female School's establishment was outlined in a letter to the Art Journal in 1860 by its then director Louisa Gann (and this basic motivation is reflected in her first phrase):

> "The deficiency of good taste in the art of design had long been felt in England, and inquiries had arisen as to the reason why our neighbours in France should so far excel us in the production of manufactured goods requiring refinement of taste in design... The English Government took the matter into consideration, and at length founded the "School of Design" in Somerset House. At first male students only were admitted, but subsequently young women were allowed to share the advantages of the institution, Mrs. McIan, a well-known and distinguished artist, being appointed superintendent of the female department. Most satisfactory proofs of the benefits to be derived from the school were soon shown in the designs produced by the students, many of which were afterwards manufactured and exhibited in the Great Exhibition of 1851." 138

The School followed a peripatetic course, from Somerset House to the 'wrong' side of the Strand (in 1848), partially transferring to South Kensington in 1852 when Henry Cole came in to reorganise the government schools, to Gower Street, and to end up in Queen Square, Bloomsbury from 1861, (although it was still called the Gower Street School sometimes).[139] Before this point, the School's funding from the Council was withdrawn, obliging it to adopt the stance of a charitable institution, holding bazaars and soirées to raise money for its continuation. The Builder reported in April, 1860: "The public should be made acquainted with the fact that in July next the school will be finally closed, unless sufficient funds be raised before that time."[140] The reasons for this move were reported in the Art Journal:

> "The School of Art for Females, in Gower Street, has received a notification from the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education, that after this year, 'the rent and local expenses of the school will cease to be paid by the Government'; on the ground that, 'as the state bears no part of the local expenses in the district schools of the metropolis, the school in Gower Street is to that extent an unfair competitor with them. For all the requirements of female students whose means are limited, the various district schools do, or may, afford ample and cheap opportunities for study." 141

The move must, however, surely be considered in relation to the fact that at this very time a concerted move was being made to get women into the Academy Schools: the Committee may have thought that such a move, if successful, would undermine the need for and use of the Gower Street school.

It is unclear why it had been thought a separate school for women was necessary, for none of the Schools was professedly male-only, and in many of the branch schools women and men were taught in segregation (if it was separation of the sexes that was desired): Indeed, in 1863, there were 82 registered Government Schools of Design, in 1870 the figure was said to be 'more than 90', [142] and female attendance in the '40's, '50's and '60's was widespread and plentiful. Figures taken from different Schools' annual reports show, however, a very wide range of proportions of male and female pupils, [143] and it can be deduced in some cases, and suspected in others, that the facilities offered to men and women were not always equal nor equally attractive, and there might, in some cases, even have been a conscious attempt to keep female numbers down (given the disparity between many women's intentions in coming to classes and the intent of those running the classes, as already described above.) Where a 'special class' was provided, male and female numbers tended to be roughly equal, in contrast to the male predominance in 'public classes' - what a special class was, however, is not in all cases clear, nor whether it was held during the day or in the evening. The demand from women, all over the country, for entry into the Schools' classes, already mentioned above as something of an embarrassment to the theorists of the Schools, is indicated by individual School reports - "The attendance of the female class has been doubled during the year, and the course of instruction carried out has induced many young persons of a higher grade of society to join it" (York, 1849) [144] - and by the Reports of the Council of the Schools of Design: the Council's Report of 1847 (the fifth such), as reported by the Art Journal, illustrated the problem, a twofold one when encountered at the London Female School:

> "The average monthly number of students on the books was, in the year 1844/5, 56, and the same in the following year. There is no increase, because there is no accommodation for a greater number, although applications for admission to the classes are very numerous. There are in this country but few departments of Ornamental Art in which females can find beneficial employment, and even in those departments it is not readily obtainable. Every available encouragement is given to the pupils in the Female School at Somerset House, who are endeavouring to obtain employment as designers for ornamental manufactures. The fees being very low (only two shillings per month), it may be readily understood that, from that circumstance alone, the applications for admission would be numerous; the purpose, however, of the establishment is education for professional qualification, not for the study as an accomplishment." 145

The attempted use of state education by middle-class women who were not supposed to become breadwinners, was initially seen as contradicting the cosy notion of philanthropic aid to the lower classes which runs through much of the public discussion of the Government Schools' operations, and such women as those 'ladies' who joined classes both in the Female School in London and in the regional Schools, were condemned as endeavouring to use a facility which had been provided for others who, it was implied, were more needy - or more properly needy - and therefore more deserving of student places. This embarrassment on the part of the Government powers, though, was quite out of place once the question of 'redundant' women - that is to say, middle-class women who would probably not marry because the female population outnumbered the male, and who therefore had to support themselves financially - became the concern of the philanthropic middle classes, for it was seen then that the Government Schools of Design could 'do their bit' in this matter, and it became vigorously asserted that they should do, and, more, that this, in fact, was one of their chiefest merits; while the Council claimed that this had been one of the aims, of the Female School, at least, all along. 146

In the paper quoted by F.D. Maurice in 1860, the Committee of management of that particular School states disingenuously:

> "However anxious we may be to retain them (young women) in that private life in which their right position undoubtedly is, yet cases constantly occur in which they must either starve in obscurity, or come forth to struggle, and perhaps to descend in the social scale, through no fault of their own. The instructions given in this School are eminently useful in preventing such misfortunes, and may be received and eventually turned to profit, without necessarily taking them out of their proper sphere." 147

But was a school, in which they might mix with males of all sorts and females of lower class, 'proper' for such 'young persons'? Horne, in his article on the subject in Household Words in 1851, had thought that, morally, the Female School was a healthier situation than others in which young women had been used to learn art:

> "Besides the advantages of such a school to the manufacturer, it is evidently an excellent thing to society to provide such a means for rendering young women able to obtain an honourable independence, and it also supersedes the necessity for engaging male teachers of drawing in ladies' schools, which has often been found very objectionable, if not injurious." 148

But the moral problems of the situation were seen as being rather more on the negative side in the regional (mixed) schools, where women's male companions might be their fellows or their teachers. The student rolls of the various Schools show that the female students were from a markedly different range of backgrounds from their male peers (who were largely from the social categories that the instigators of the Schools had envisioned): Edinburgh reported, for instance, in 1856, a student roll consisting of 231 males and 180 females, the former comprising 14 painters, 3 sculptors, 30 architects, and engineers, 4 draughtsmen, 6

engravers, 8 housepainters, 1 ornamental painter, 10 general engravers, 3 ornamental engravers, 16 wood carvers, 6 glass stainers, 3 brassfounders, 7 joiners and cabinet-makers, 3 stone-cutters, 3 mechanical engineers, 37 pupil teachers, 3 school-masters; and the latter comprising 87 amateurs, 20 schoolmistresses, 73 pupil teachers.[149] In similar vein, the Art Union reported in 1848 that "the pupils are the daughters of persons in a very respectable phase of life, several of the parents being physicians, solicitors, artists, etc."[150] In the branch schools (not the Female School), classes tended to become termed 'Ladies' class', 'Mechanics class', 'Artisans' class', and such like, once it became obvious that the range of students being received was a very different one from that at first expected, and class and gender groupings were respected.

The Art Journal devoted a long article in 1860 to the 'failure' of the Female School:

> "It cannot be concealed that the original expectations formed from those schools have not been realised: some have scattered blame fully and freely over the Department of Science and Art, attributing failure to the unpractical character of the education given; and this class of wise behind-hand prophets now tell us they never supposed that girls could be trained to do what was expected from them... The expectation was that girls educated in schools of design would be able to earn a repsectable maintenance as designers, or wood-engravers, or porcelain-painters, or in other similar occupations. These hopes have been frustrated from various causes..."

Somehow, the women themselves were to blame:

> "... the greatest source of failure has arisen from the unreasonable expectations formed, engendered by the ardent enthusiasm of some, and the unthinking ignorance of others... instead of looking at their education as a means of bettering industrial pursuits, it has been more generally fancied by the girls

> to be a means, through them, of regenerating the national taste. They go to situations not as workers, but as teachers and authorities in Art." 151

Even here, the awkward issue of female pupils who wanted to be artists, is not taken up. Yet, that many women in the Government Schools were there with such an intention, is obvious from different evidences. Clayton complains:

> "... in those days no advantages whatever were offered in the Government schools to those female students who desired to attain proficiency in any branch of art, except decorative art. No models were then allowed, no draperies or other accessories. The "Figure Class", as it was pompously, if ironically, designated, was 'instructed' in one small room, containing a few casts from the antique, the instruction being imparted during one daily visit from the lady superintendent." 152 (Visual evidence shows, indeed, a marked lack of resources for the adequate instruction of the female students, until the latter 1860's, fig.53)

While this criticism is justified, it does not make clear that, in the face of the facts, thinking changed; [153] but how ambiguous the Government Schools' connection with fine art remained, can be seen in such expressions as the following, where Sir Francis Grant presented the prizes at the Female School in 1868:

> "I take the most lively interest in the remarkable progress which female art is making in this country. It is delightful to reflect that young ladies of good education and limited means are no longer confined to one profession... we must all rejoice that the door has been thrown wide open leading to another profession in which ladies have proved themselves so eminently qualified to excel..." (refers to Louisa Starr, recent gold medallist at the Royal Academy) "... allow me to express the hope that those ladies who have gained prizes today will continue to reap fresh laurels, and that the younger students will never

> flinch from the labour which is necessary to acquire excellence." 154

Or the following, where Lord Granville distributed prizes at the new (1877) Dover branch school:

> "I wish to know if we have any reason to be ashamed of such names of our Henriette Brownes or Miss Thompsons, although perhaps their surnames have not quite the same aesthetic sound as the Fontanas, or Vigris, the Rossis, the Gentileschi, the Anguiscolai, and Marietta, daughter of Tintoretto. I rejoice, therefore, that in our schools of art the doors are thrown open to female students, and that there are in Dover, as in London and other places, a large number of these female students availing themselves of every advantage, and showing very great success." 155

Specific proofs that women had found governmental art education insufficient or inappropriate for their desires, can be seen in the number of women who spent just one term or a short time at the Schools, as opposed to completing the course. This was the case for Elizabeth Collingridge; Edith Courtauld; Mary Ellen Edwards; Harriette Seymour (Clayton notes that she "did not find the method of instruction very useful to her, as it is adapted principally to designing for decorative purposes, and she sought rather for aid in composition, and the management of light and shade");[156] although, in fairness, Elizabeth Thompson's enthusiastic account of the two years she spent at the South Kensington School should be remembered.[157] The South Kensington School, however, does seem to have been the most fine art orientated of the branch schools where women's experience can be assessed; the Illustrated London News reported in October 1863:

> "The new central art schools in connection with the Kensington Museum will be thrown open to the students on Monday next for the winter session. The male and female classes will be on separate floors, and in each series there will be separate rooms assigned for

> drawing, painting, and modelling, with a common lecture-room for both male and female classes..." 158

The Female School, too, evidently allowed its emphasis on design to wane in favour of a little more art, as the years went by, for the Art Journal's report of the School's end of year exhibition of work, in December 1870, betrays quite a melange of applied and fine artowrk:

> "... By Miss Emily Selous, who distinguished herself last year, and gained the Queen's gold medal this season, were a well-modelled statuette of the famous Discobolus, or quoit-player, a most attractive head of our Saviour, and some carefully-executed models of hands and feet. Miss Whiteman Webb and Miss Edith Boyle received each a silver national medal, the latter for a clever design for a screen. Miss Julia Pocock, who, in 1869, won the Queen's medal, was an exhibitor both of sculpture and painting: her works in the former class being a statuette after the anitque, and a Venus; in the latter class, paintings and drawings from the life, and fruit-pieces. The other ladies to whom were awarded national bronze medals are Miss Alice Ellis and Miss Alice Locke, the latter for a beautiful drawing of the Lilium lancifolium..." 159

While the annual report for that academic year, reported by the Art Journal in April 1871, mentioned fan-designs, an essay on the use of plants in ornamentation, designs for chromo-lithographs, oil-cloth, silk and carpets, [160] while an engraving of a class in the Female School published in the Illustrated London News in 1868 (fig.24) supported this report of wide-ranging study with an emphasis now on fine art. Indeed, those women who did attend branches of the Government Schools whose eventual field can be attested to, display a broad range of art-skills: of the artists already mentioned, Collingridge became a decorative designer; Courtauld painted religious pictures; Edwards became the illustrator MEE, and also painted in oils (fig.372) while,

additionally, Rebecca Solomon attended the Spitafields School and chose oil painting as her milieu (fig.21); Charity Palmer went to one of the London branches, becoming a fruit and flower painter; Frances Redgrave attended South Kensington and took up landscape-painting; Catherine Edwards, later Sparkes, attended the Lambeth School and went on to paint for Minton's; the two Mutries, queens of flower-painting (figs.183/6), had been trained at the Manchester School. Jeaffreson, in his 1870 survey of the art schools in England for women, offered an explanation for the change in character of the work that was done, specifically at the Female School; he wrote:

> "... the school keeps its main and original purpose - 'To enable young women of the middle class to obtain honourable and profitable employment, and... to improve ornamental design in manufactures' - in constant sight; but the excellence of the art-instruction afforded within its walls is yearly drawing to its classes a larger number of girls who wish to practise art for art's sake, and have no near prospect of being compelled to earn their own means of subsistence." 161

Given that, by this time, women could have gone into the Academy Schools if they wanted to become academic artists, this indicates that, at last, the Government Schools had become art schools as we know them, willing and able to train artists and designers. From their success in the Schools and in the Female School in this period, it would seem that the women in these Schools were well pleased with this compromise; the Art Journal, however, thought it meet to remind the students that their ambition should remain within certain bounds, declaring at the end of its report on the Female School in 1870:

> "... of a surety, Art will never take her out of her natural sphere, tempt her to slight or abandon the enjoyments of home, or interfere with the household duties which are, as they ought to be, woman's privilege, pride, and reward...." 162

This was written in early 1871, when the Slade school was on the horizon. Unlike the Female School (as originally intended or as obliged to become), the Slade was declaredly a training-ground for fine artists. The place which it could take among other institutions of art instruction was outlined by the first principal, Edward Poynter, in his opening address of October 2, 1871:

> "Except at the Royal Academy there is no school of any importance in London for the study of high art. In the various branches of the Government Schools, the primary object is confessedly the study of ornamental design, as applied to the industrial arts, and attention is only paid to high art in so far as the study of the figure is necessary for some particular branch of ornamental manufacture. There are no doubt in London private schools where the study of the figure, from nature or the antique, is made the principal object, but these are chiefly used by students as preparatory for admission to the Royal Academy, where, as the schools are open to the public without payment, it is necessary to impose a certain test of proficiency before admission. There are also in London various clubs or societies, where artists subscribe and meet together for study from the living model... Considering therefore the large number of students of art to be found in London, and the fact that there are no schools of importance for the study of the figure, except those of the Royal Academy, where the space is necessarily limited, it is to be presumed that there is room for a School of Fine Art, where the study of high art may be encouraged to the extent of its being the only object of the institution." 163

From the start, the Slade was of particular benefit to female students; despite its bias towards high art and, therefore, the nude - theretofore difficult ground for women to exploit successfully - women could get on at the Slade; Poynter paid them special attention in his first address:

> "There is unfortunately a difficulty which has

> always stood in the way of female students acquiring that thorough knowledge of the figure which is essential to the production of work of a high class; and that is, of course, that they are debarred from the same complete study of the model that is open to the male students... But I have always been anxious to institute a class where the half-draped model might be studied, to give those ladies who are desirous of obtaining sound instruction in drawing the figure, an opportunity of gaining the necessary knowledge... It is my desire that in all the classes, except of course those for the study of the nude model, the male and female students should work together..." 164 (fig. 23)

Such attempts at equality were bound to attract women to the Slade - it was expressly made clear at the outset that the six three-year scholarships of £50 were open to women and to men - while other factors, too, rendered it more desirable for female students than either the Academy or the Female School. In Stuart McDonald's words:

> "From its opening, the Slade School in Gower Street had great social advantages over the contemporary art schools. It was free from the regulations and restrictions of Cole's state system, it was on a sounder financial footing than any private school, and it had the additional status of being part of a university college. The surest confirmation of its respectability was made in 1871, when Edward Poynter, ARA, a lauded High Artist, was appointed to the first professorship. It was only to be expected that persons of the middle and upper classes, especially the ladies, would prefer to attend the Slade rather than the South Kensington Schools, where the course was tedious and some of the pupils of rather humble origin." 165

During the early years of the school, female students outnumbered male, and an early proof of the conspicuous place women were allowed to take at the Slade is that the two scholarships given out in 1872 were both awarded to young women, Miss E.M. Wild and Miss B.A. Spencer, while one of the winners in 1874 was Evelyn Pickering (who, along with Kate Greenaway, is perhaps the

most distinguished of the first batch of 'Slade girls'). [166]

The system of admission was paternal: no specific entry requirement was established, but the principal admitted a prospective student on examination of his or her work in interview. Poynter's sympathy with female students is clear - it will be remembered that he was the sponsor of a number of female entrants to the Academy Schools - and his successor (in 1876) was Alphonse Legros, who came from a climate (mid-century Paris) of greater toleration of women in the arts than was found in contemporary London. The Slade's debt to French modes of art education was much discussed from its outset, but it was perhaps this greater tolerance of women practitioners that was the most important aspect of the School's Continèntalism, as far as female students were concerned. An article of 1883, on "The Slade Girls", implicitly acknowledges this: the writer is Charlotte Weeks:

> "The Slade Schools have from the first taken up an independent position as regards the method of instruction pursued. Mr. Poynter, the first appointed Slade Professor at London University, came, as it were, to virgin soil. Bringing to his task a practical acquaintance with the Continental methods of teaching, as well as with those of the Royal Academy and South Kensington Schools, and having a strong conviction of the evils existing in the latter, he set to work to graft the good of the French method on to the foundation of the English... Here, for the first time in England, indeed in Europe, a public Fine Art School was thrown open to male and female students on precisely the same terms, and giving to both sexes fair and equal opportunities." [167]

The precise nature of those opportunities can be gauged from Poynter's annual addresses to the students. His approach combined academic criteria with a more modern (French) application of such ideals than was found at the RA, enlivened by a degree of Ruskinian appreciation of the animating spirit which an artist must evince in the face of nature. His prioritising of what he unapologetically called high art, was fundamental to his teaching:

> "To train a student, whatever his (sic) ultimate career is to be, for the highest forms of art is the one end I keep in view. Thus the subjects I give out for practice in composition are always drawn from Biblical or classical sources, or are of a kind which require treatment of a classical nature - i.e. they require the introduction of nude or classically-draped figures; not because I think that no subjects of another nature should be treated;... but because I consider that practice in that form of art, demanding as it does the highest sense of beauty, and involving the greatest difficulties in drawing and design, is the best preparation for any style which the student's natural tendencies will lead him ultimately to adopt." 168

Thus, students studied from the antique and had to become proficient in drawing before they could go on to painting, but the preliminary stages were kept as brief as possible - not dwelt upon - in order that the student could study as much from the life (draped and nude and character models) as possible, developing a sense of the flowing line of natural forms. "The more you work from nature, the more astonished you will be at the beauties you will find... Nature contains greater depths of beauty than we can fathom," said Poynter in his opening address to the School's students. [169] In this way, the Slade's teaching programme provided academic skills (more fully than the Academy itself, given that women there were still kept from the nude model), with avant-garde methods used in class embracing elements of French and Ruskinian approaches, in a prestigious atmosphere. Women did well here:

> "An analysis of the competition lists since the foundation shows that five Slade scholarships and twenty-two prizes have been carried off by female students. Bearing in mind that the schools are but now in their eleventh session, and that many of the prizes, such as those for landscape, etching, anatomy, and anatomical drawing, are of more recent institution, the proportion of prizes gained by ladies is not insignificant..." 170

and their vindication of the system of mixed classes and freer study from the nude was credited with opening up other means of access to these things: "it is to the precedent then established that ladies have since elsewhere had the necessary advantages for study placed within their reach." [171]

It is probably telling of their hard experience of the deficiencies in art education for women, that women of the generations before the Slade generation turned in as many numbers as they did, to the teaching of art. They were, of course, encouraged to do so, because teaching art was seen to be less distasteful for bourgeoise seekers after employment than governessing or shop-keeping, and because women teaching others to be artistic was less threatening to the status quo than women asserting themselves as artistic. But the limited role which, even here, they could expect, was approached - albeit naïvely - by the Art Journal's "Art-Work for Women", of 1872:

> "Teaching is universally admitted to be woman's special work, and we should naturally expect to find women teaching drawing or painting as generally as they teach music... In Great Britain are 117 Art-schools, where 20,133 pupils receive instruction. Of these three only are superintended by ladies: one in Queen Square, London, one in Edinburgh, and the Queen's Institute, Dublin. Out of 338 Art night-classes, where the attendance numbers 10,000 five are taught by women. Government aid is also given to 1,359 schools for the poor, containing 147,243 children who are taught drawing. There is here, in every social grade, room for the employment of women as Art-teachers." [172]

The writer's next sentence, however, broached the complexity of the situation, as it existed in social reality:

> "Doubtless many of the classes in the schools may be taught by women, but, if so, only in subordinate positions. This cannot be the result of want of teaching-power in women, for Miss Gann, the head of the Queen Square School of Art, stands, in 1871, second on the

> list of Art-teachers, having been third in the previous year."

Gann's predecessor, Fanny McIan, was also often cited as a shining example of female teaching in art, yet the fact remained that there were no heads of schools which were not female schools: no female teachers, of course, at the RA Schools, neither at the Slade; and no woman-run academy to parallel Leigh's (Heatherly's) or Cary's. [173] However, Eliza Bridell-Fox has already been mentioned as taking an initiative in female art education: as Clayton acknowledged,

> "Mrs. Bridell-Fox is not only an artist, but one who takes an enthusiastic interest in the progress of those who study art, more especially in female students. By her vigorous efforts to free the hard and laborious way, she has done much to aid the upward pilgrimage of girls now studying." 174

Louise Jopling established a school for women in 1887, (fig. 54, 55) in line with her declaration that,

> "In my opinion, every girl should have a vocation, either artistic or otherwise, by which, if the necessity arose, she could earn her own bread, and be independent." 175

By contrast, Henrietta Ward's school was definitely for young ladies, as a report of it towards the end of the century shows:

> "Although professional pupils study with Mrs. Ward, her Classes appeal most particularly to ladies who wish to have the moderate talent which they possess, trained so as to be a source of interest and amusement to them, and not a means of earning a livlihood... to encourage steadfastness of purpose in the youthful amateur mind is the chief aim in Mrs. Ward's artistic instruction." 176

Women had taken pupils in the early part of the period under

discussion here, but in the spirit of the drawing mistress and her individual private pupil: Jopling's and Ward's opening of their studios, to establish a school, was very different.

The Art Journal, above, noted, though it did not dismantle, the persistence of the secondary role for women, even in a sphere which was being promoted as particularly her own: the Englishwoman's Review addressed itself to this question, not surprisingly with somewhat more pith:

> "The inevitable effect of the superior education which is now within the reach of women must be that they can no longer remain satisfied with the subordinate position in which they have so long acquiesced... A woman needs fully as much self-reliance and strength of mind to carry her through the trials of life as a man; in the present state of society she sometimes needs more... We counsel all the friends of women's higher education to make up their minds to... a moral law which shall lay down the same rules of guidance for women as for men, and of a social system which shall give them political and professional equality." 177

Behind this stirring stuff lies an awareness that higher education for women (not solely in art) signalled a change, not only in women's position, but also in the positions mid-Victorian society took. The education issue is, accordingly, the most important with which this survey of the mid-Victorian woman artist has to deal.

The mid-century, then, saw a series of moves in art education for women which turned the tide from the arid and superficial nature of things in the '40's to a serious and organised set-up which continued to progress as the century proceeded, though at a somewhat stumbling pace. One of the most prominent of the individual figures that this period presents, Henrietta Ward, recalled in her autobiography the enthusiasm of the time when she started her school for women:

"I started my art classes with four pupils, and soon had more than I could possibly cope with. When I used to arrive in the morning from Windsor, I was soon accustomed to finding the hall full of parents and guardians, wishing to place their daughters under my charge." 178

With prophetic optimism, Ellet had written, in her magnum opus of 1859:

> "At the present time, the prospect is fair of a reward for study and unfaltering application in woman as in man: her freedom ... is greater, and the sphere of her activity is wider and more effective than it has ever been. The general and growing apprehension of the importance of female education will gradually lead to dissatisfaction with the superficial culture of modern schools, and to the adoption of some plan which shall develop the powers of those who are taught, and strengthen their energies for the active duties of life. Many advantages besides these have encouraged the advancement of women as artists beyond any point reached in preceding years. We may thus find an increasing number of young women who, bent on making themselves independent by their own efforts, spare no pains to qualify themselves." 179

Louisa Stuart, Lady Waterford, wrote in 1880 to Eleanor Boyle (EVB) - like her, of the generation of women who had not even had the Female School to use when they needed a training: "I get rather dispirited at my failures, and the want of that knowledge and finish I see in all women's work at exhibitions when they have had good training: there was none in my day..." 180

The last word can appropriately go to the Englishwoman's Review, a consistent agitator for improved education for women in all spheres, discussing in 1877 the subject of art education, and summing up the ways in which it had changed for women in the recent past:

> "Of course, women could always study art, and

get admission to most of the great galleries, and copy the masterpieces there; (fig.56) and they could win admission for their pictures to the annual exhibitions of academies. But it was very hard indeed until lately for a girl in England to get the real and thorough training which would enable her to do full justice to whatever artistic faculty she might have. The academies, too, when they received a woman's pictures, treated her much as the Universities until lately used to treat Dissenters - they witheld any title of honour for no matter what excellence. We cannot say that we have changed all that even yet, but we have certainly changed a great deal of it. The conditions of education in art are being rapidly equalised for men and women. It is no longer possible in this country for a girl to believe that there are twenty difficulties placed in the way of a real artistic career for her which are all carefully removed from the path of her brother. Now at length in this country women are fairly entered for the competition. All, or nearly all, of the preliminary inequalities have been removed. Soon the world will probably begin to compare pictures without reference to the sex of the artist. Hitherto we have always been led to class women painters together, and to estimate their merits by a standard supposed to be suited to women alone. Women have often had a certain amount of praise for their pictures which the pictures would never have got if they had come from the hands of men. In one of Lord Lytton's earlier novels we are told of an English country place so barren and dull that the churchyard acquired quite a celebrity for wild picturesqueness because it had three thistles and a tree. Art among women was appraised until lately on very much the same sort of principle. This in itself was almost fatal to anything like genuine progress in art among women. But this kind of feeling can hardly be said to exist any longer. The girl student now goes in for hard work, thorough study, and what the whist-playing lady made famous by Lamb would have called 'the rigour of the game'." 181

Notes

1. See, for instance, "Woman, and her chance as an artist", Magazine of Art, April 1888, p.xxv; "Women at Work: their functions in Art", Magazine of Art, 1884, p.98.

2. Callen, op. cit., p.27.

3. For debate on the contradictions of the education question, see, for instance, John Morley, "The Social and Political Dependence of Women", Fortnightly Review, 1867, vol.1 (new series), p.764; Elizabeth, Lady Eastlake, "The English-woman at School", Quarterly Review, July 1878, vol.146, p.40; Margaret Oliphant, "Mill on the Subjection of Women", Edinburgh Review, vol.130, October, 1869, p.596ff.

4. G. Burne-Jones, Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, London, 1912, vol.1, ch.2, p.218; "Mrs. Rossetti" is, of course, Elizabeth Siddal: for a consideration of her as an artist, see Nochlin and Harris, op. cit., p.219. For a discussion of the idea that "art was a plant that grew in the garden of love", see Greer, op. cit., ch.2.

5. Reflections on the assumption that "My wife and I are one, and I am he" are abundant in the period, but see, for instance, "The Exclusiveness of Women", Saturday Review, January 19, 1870, p.242; the works of Sarah Stickney Ellis (The Wives of England, The Daughters of England, The Mothers of England): "One important truth sufficiently impressed upon your mind will materially assist in this desirable consummation - it is the superiority of your husband..." (The Wives of England, London, 1843, ch.1, p.17) or the well-intentioned Rev. Richard Cobbold, The Character of Woman, London, 1848.

6. Cook and Wedderburn, op. cit., vol.18, p.128.

7. "Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects", Saturday Review, December 15, 1855, p.116.

8. Englishwoman's Journal, July 1874, vol.XIX, p.226.

9. Unsigned editorial, Oxford Art Journal, April 1980, p.3.

10. Saturday Review, May 15, 1858, p.505.

11. "Women as Artists", Spectator, July 29, 1876; the same point was made, at length, by F.T. Palgrave, "Women in the Fine Arts", Macmillan's Magazine, 1865, p.118 and p.209; see also Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, London, 1929, for a later articulation of the same idea.

12. Clayton, op. cit., respectively: vol.2, p.316; vol.2, p.299; vol.2, p.240; vol.2, p.264; a later generation was to be much more forthright about the need for sound training: "This put an end to my Art studies, as never after this had I the leisure, or the money, to continue them. I had to become my own instructor. Does not someone say that, if you teach yourself, you have a fool for a master?" (Jopling, op. cit., p.8).

13. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.11.

14. ibid, vol.2, p.177.

15. J.L. Roget, op. cit., vol.1, ch.3, p.337.

16. Corbaux was sometimes credited with having led women to attend the Royal Academy students' lectures: see Englishwoman's Review, August 8, 1857, p.12 and Art Journal, July 1, 1857, p.215; although Ward later claimed this title for herself: see below, ch.6, and Ward, Memories of Ninety Years, London, 1924, ch.4, p.58.

17. Ellet, op. cit., p.218.

18. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.334.

19. ibid, vol.2, p.316; Frances Seares married the obliging Mr. Rossiter in 1860 - instances of this circumstance are not as frequent as mid-Victorian fiction would lead one to suppose, but another example is Catherine Edwards, who studied at the Lambeth School and subsequently (1868) married John Sparkes, head of the establishment.

20. ibid, vol.2, p.299.

21. James Dafforne, "British Artists, their style and character", no.75, Art Journal, September 1, 1864, p.261; a later account of Osborn's career (The Lady, September 2, 1886, p.183) puts a different construction on the same facts: "After a time came Miss Osborn's introduction to the London world and to the best course of study then available for women. Her father, however, was rather averse to his daughter taking up Art as a profession, and it was with difficulty that he at last consented to allow her joining a drawing-class. For two months Miss Osborn worked at Mr. Dickinson's Academy, going to the evening class three times a week for two hours; then her progress was such that she was allowed to join the morning-class for three hours daily. But the practice thus obtained was unsufficient for an enthusiastic worker, and it was not long before Miss Osborn and her friend Miss Durant, the sculptress, prevailed upon the porter to let them work in the gallery during the afternoon, when it was usually left in possession of unappreciative mice... Mr Leigh of Newman Street offered to let Miss Osborn work with some private pupils at his Art School, and there, in the short space of eight months, she received all the instruction in oil-painting it was ever her lot to obtain. Miss Osborn may thus be said to be almost self-taught..."

22. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.146.

23. Ward, Memories, p.58.

24. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.305; this circumstance often meant, of course, that the woman took up the genre of the teaching relative, necessarily: this was certainly the case in Desvignes' case, as it was in Harrison's, and Bouvier Nicholl's.

25. ibid, vol.2, p.280; her mother was Mary Harrison.

26. ibid, vol.2, p.230; her father, James Rous, was an amateur.

27. ibid, vol.2, p.247; she was not related to the landscapist Edmund and his father Henry: perhaps the brother Clayton mentions was an amateur.

28. ibid, vol.2, p.34; her father was Augustus Bouvier, her brothers Gustavus, Joseph and Urbain, all working in domestic and fancy pictures.

29. ibid, vol.2, p.424; her father was an amateur.

30. See below, ch.6 for more on the Bretts.

31. See Burton, op. cit., p.16.

32. See Elizabeth Butler, An Autobiography, London, 1922.

33. Art Journal, February 1, 1866, p.56; the Society of Female Artists is presented specifically as a move in the 'Condition-of-Women' issue by the Spectator, "More Employments for Women", May 9, 1857, p.496; see above, ch.1, n.8 and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh, 1856, p.388ff and passim, for more detailed demonstration of the sorts of activities which 'degraded' the middle-class female intellect.

34. Barbara Stephen, Emily Davies and Girton College, London, 1927, p.39; later, art gained the ascendancy over politics, in her mind, though her actions continued to belie the fact: "... I love my art more than ever - in fact more in proportion to other loves than ever for I confess the enthusiasm with which I used to leave my easel and go to teach at the school or help Bessie in her affairs is wearing off, and if it were not that at 35 one has acquired habits which happily cannot be broken I should not go on as I do; I could not begin as I used to years ago at any of these dusty dirty attempts to help one's poor fellow creatures, and it is quite natural that my life abroad and out of doors should make me more enterprising for boar-hunts or painting excursions, than for long sojourns in stifling rooms with miserable people." Bodichon to William Allingham, July 5, 1862, Allingham and Williams, Letters to William Allingham, London, 1911, p.78.

35. Englishwoman's Review, June 27, 1857, p.7 and August 8, 1857, p.12, respectively. The other subjects of the series were Mary Bosanquet, Elizabeth Blackwell, Frances Brown, Charlotte Cushman, Caroline Norton, Caroline Chisholm.

36. Athenaeum, August 11, 1866, p.170; and see note 141; in recognition of this, people who continued to address themselves to women as dilettanti, betrayed a conspicuously apologetic tone in their expressions, going to some lengths to justify themselves, as in Mary Constance Clarke's "Oil Painting without a Master, of, Hints for Amateurs", Nature and Art, October 1, 1866, vol.1, p.148: "The following hints for painting figures in oils are written for those amateurs who, not having been able to meet with good

37. instruction, are yet desirous of trying to 'walk alone' without the help of a master. The rules to be observed will probably be needed only by those who are teaching themselves, as the pupils of any master will, of course, wish to follow the practice of that master, in preference to any new or unaccustomed style. However, I hope that the experience of many years of study, and the results of much experimental painting, may not be found utterly useless to any amateur artist; and as I have so often been asked, "how I do it", I have endeavoured in this little treatise, to explain as well as I can, in writing, all that I have hitherto taught by word of mouth only. I am quite aware that many artists may object to several practices I have dared to suggest; but after having tried divers styles and modes of colouring, I have come to the conclusion, that for an amateur without a master, either of the following methods will be found the best to adopt. Trusting then, that these hints may meet with the approval of some artists, and be useful to those amateurs who are struggling on in the dark, and with whom I well know how to sympathize, I will, without further introduction, explain how a picture may be painted in oils..."

37. F.T. Palgrave, "Women in the Fine Arts", Macmillan's Magazine, 1865, p.118.

38. "Sisters in Art", The Illustrated Exhibitor and Magazine of Art, nos.40-49, 1852, vol.2, p.214/6, p.238/40, p.262/3, p.286/8, p.317/9, p.334/6, p.347/8, p.362/4.

39. ibid, p.334.

40. ibid, p.238.

41. ibid, p.336.

42. ibid

43. ibid, p.364; the young woman's colleagues in this enterprise and their teaching assistants, as far as can be told, were male: perhaps this was meant as an indication of whence the authority and financing for such an enterprise should come.

44. ibid; Alice, herself, had very early, we are told, come into the study of anatomy and had drawn from the life in outdoor locations, and studied from nature. Earlier in the story, the defects of 'the common art-schools' in this particular had been implied more than once: "So, miss," said Giuseppe, ..."May I ask, as I know a good deal about such matters, where you are studying, and for what purpose? Are you in the Female School of Design?" "No, sir," she said modestly, ..."I am so far advanced in instruction, as to be little benefited, beyond perhaps the facility in mere design, if I went there... No! I study in an academy where our attention is chiefly directed to the living figure and anatomical drawing." (ibid, p.263)... "considering the undoubted talent she has to deal with, her (England's) Female School of Design is a national disgrace..."(ibid, p.335)

45. ibid, p.364; women would not ordinarily, at this time, get instruction in such subjects anywhere, let alone in conjunction with an art training.

46. ibid

47. A.M. Howitt, An Art-student in Munich, London, 1853 (Longman); apparently, the inspiration for the book came from Elizabeth Gaskell (see Mary Howitt, An Autobiography, London, 1891, p.66). See note 79 below.

48. ibid, vol.1, ch.7, p.92.

49. "Employment for Women", Spectator, March 31, 1860, p.305; also, and in line with the author of "Sisters in Art": "... here is a sort of training which, not only fits women for specific employments, but materially contributes to render the faculties generally, of hand, eye, and head, sharper, more accurate, and confident." (Spectator, May 12, 1860, p.456).

50. See note 79, below. She exhibited at the National Institution, Crystal Palace, Society of Female Artists, and Royal Academy in the '50's, her pictures including "Margaret returning from the Fountain (Faust)" (1854), "The Lady (Shelley)" (1855), "The castaway" (1855); the whereabouts of all these works are unknown to the present writer. She also wrote, and illustrated that writing, e.g. "The School of Life", Illustrated Magazine of Art, 1853, p.184ff.

51. Not only in things that Alice says, is this point made, but in the fact that the trio of sisters in art all assiduously take advantage of what facilities there are for the furtherance of their art.

52. Howitt, op. cit., vol.2, ch.20, p.196.

53. Illustrated London News, February 16, 1861, p.152.

54. Athenaeum, February 9, 1861, p.200; for another comparison of women's art work to such domestic crafts as Berlin-wool work, see Punch's review of the first exhibition of the Society of Female Artists, below, ch.3. (fig.57)

55. The Art Student, April 1, 1864, p.53.

56. Art Journal, February 1, 1872, p.90.

57. Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, 1854, vol.12, p.122.

58. This, in colloquial terms, is the idea of something being 'good - for a woman': the Saturday Review's expression of it, in discussing "Female Intellect", was: "The first-rate woman does not equal the first-rate man, but she stands far above the second-rate man" (March 25, 1865, p.336) and, with direct reference to art, it survives in that relic of Victorian aesthetics, Walter Shaw Sparrow's well-meaning Woman Painters of the World, London, 1905, where in the Preface, he writes, in consideration of a Vigée-Lebrun self-portrait and child, "As examples in art on complete woman-liness, mention may be made of two exquisite portraits by

Madame Lebrun, in which... the painter discloses the inner essence and the life of maternal love, and discloses them with a caressing playfulness of passion unattainable by men, and sometimes unappreciated by men... Such pictures may not be the highest form of painting, but highest they are in their own realm of human emotion... There is room in the garden of art for flowers of every kind and for butterflies and birds of every species; and why should anyone complain because a daisy is not a rose, or because nightingales and thrushes, despite their family resemblance, have voices of their own, dissimilar in compass and in quality?" Women's art would not be considered truly equally with men's, until the world thought as well of daisies and thrushes as it did of roses and nightingales! See ch.5 below, for amplification of this idea of women's arts.

59. "On the education of the Artist", New Quarterly Review, 1861, vol.3, p.351; sensible and constructive sentiments like this were frequently made when the subject in hand was art education tout court - that is to say, by implication, art education for men - while the same writers would hesitate to make similar points in application to female art education. This same article, for instance, (which appeared unsigned) sensibly states: "Genius, unaided by study, will only produce brilliant sparks that expire as soon as they are created." Such plain truths, emphatically and frequently stated, were what the state of female art education needed for its reformation.

60. Art Journal, February 1, 1872, p.90; their pictures at the SFA that year were: Ward, "The Tower, ay the Tower" and Jerichau, "Danish Fisherman", "My daughters, seashore, Zeeland", "Homeless", "Portrait", "Penserosa", "The Danish Vicar's Birthday".

61. See Greer, op. cit., ch.16, The Nineteenth Century, p.318/9.

62. In the 1840's and 1850's, the most obvious way for women to help themselves was to attend lectures for ladies; the Athenaeum often carried on its front page such notices as: "Fine Art - Practical Lectures for Ladies Only. No.1 Torrington Square. Mr. George Scharf, Jun.FSA.FRSL, will lecture, at 12 o'clock on the following days: Tuesday, March 4 - 'On Ancient Painted Vases, their Varities, Ornaments, and Uses'. Thursday, March 6 - 'On the Muscular Structure of the Hand and Forearm, as far as necessary for Artists.' Saturday, March 8 - 'On Medieval Art, the Successors of Giotto, the Age of Rienzi, and Expulsion of the Greeks from Constantinople by the Turks'..." (Athenaeum, March 1, 1856, p.1) Even more frequently advertised were series of lectures in theoretical art, that is to say, in art history: see, for instance, the advertisement on the front of the Athenaeum, January 7, 1860, for "Dr. Kinkel's lectures for Ladies, on the History of Art" - he also offered German, History, and Geography! Later on, the means for self-help were closer to hand: the Athenaeum reported

in 1875 a proposal that "female artists desirous of mutual improvement, and who hope to gain by the criticisms of a qualified painter" should meet for mutual criticism, under the eye of W.H. Fisk, who "acts as Examiner, and is likely to do his 'spiriting' wisely and kindly"; the location was to be the SLA's gallery in Marlborough Street, but it is not clear whether the meetings are a Society function, as such (Athenaeum, November 6, 1875, p.616).

63. Art Journal, May 1, 1858, p.143.

64. Englishwoman's Review, August 8, 1857, p.12.

65. Obvious examples are Eva Gonzales and Berthe Morisot: see D. Rouart, ed., The Correspondence of Berthe Morisot, London, 1950; Chaplin and Cogniet were well-known for receiving women students into their studios for instruction; see Jopling's account of her experience as a student in Paris (op. cit., p.3ff) under the former.

66. From the diary of Rosa Brett (see below, ch.6), comes the hint that, although it might be young male painters who took the young lady pupils on, their families might well have helped them expedite the contract: Rosa prepared materials and subjects for "John's young ladies" quite as much as he himself seems to have done. Similarly, in the case of John Cotman, his daughter Ann made drawings for him to use as teaching materials (in the possession of Castle Museum, Norwich).

67. S. McDonald, The History and Philosophy of Art Education, London, 1970, p.144; see also K. Heleniak, William Mulready, Yale, 1980, for a specific instance: "By far the majority of Mulready's private pupils were women, often daughters or wives of the landed gentry, or aristocrats like the Swinburne women. Drawing, painting, sewing and light reading were the principal activities allowed these ladies" (p.163). This refers to the early decades of the century, but the situation did not alter appreciably until the middle of the century.

68. As private schools had a vested interest in the defects of public art education: the Art Gossip column of The Artist reported, at the beginning of 1855, the imminent opening of an elementary school of design by Aresti and Gruner, expressing the following sentiment, which was no doubt sweet music to the aforementioned gentlemen's ears: "Notwithstanding the establishment of public schools of Art, schools of this private character must ever obtain the preference; for in them the individual capacity and wants of each pupil are cared for. Many students who find the public schools inadequate to their wants, may obtain what they require in those of the character now under consideration." (The Artist, January 27, 1855, p.14).

69. A note of caution should be sounded here about the difficulty of establishing to what extent a woman was a certain artist's pupil, for Clayton tends to try and aggrandise her subjects'

pedigree by studding it with famous names, and the apprenticeships she claims for her subjects are not always betrayed by their work (if, indeed, any specimens of their work are available). A pupilship frequently referred to in the art press, was that of Margaret Robbinson to Daniel Maclise, but research into Maclise and Robbinson alike has failed to verify this connection. Of the artists mentioned here, the teacher/pupil relation is easiest to certify in the case of Helen Coleman (Angell) and William Henry Hunt, for not only does her work build on his, (fig.58), but he admitted the connection: "Miss Helen Coleman, now Mrs. Angell, on whom, among the many who attempted to walk in his tracks William Hunt not long before his death said his mantle had fallen." (Times, April 22, 1875, p.6). See below, ch.5, for more on this artist and her connection with Hunt.

70. Quoted in P. Johnson and E. Money, The Nasmyth Family of Painters, 1977, p.45.

71. W. Graham Robertson, Time Was, London, 1931, p.25.

72. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.235.

73. Examples of woman-to-woman teaching in the period include Annie Dixon being taught by Magdalene Ross (Dalton), Marian Chase by Margaret Gillies, Sarah Setchell by Louisa Sharpe, and Maria Margitson by Eloise Stannard. In the story "Sisters in Art" discussed above, the heroine's first teacher is a woman, and remains so until the latter's death.

74. Sass's became Cary's in 1840 and Leigh's (after having been Dickinson's) became Heatherly's in 1860; the history of the latter is being researched by Mrs. Jean Spring, and has been written on by Christopher Neve in Country Life ("London Art School in Search of a Home", August 17, 1978, p.448 and "A Question of Survival", August 31, 1978, p.570). See also McDonald, op. cit., p.33ff.

75. Jeaffreson, op. cit., p.51; most accounts of Parris' career, however, make no mention of his educational role: of standard biographical sources (including Bryan's, Bénézit, Thieme-Becker, and the Art Journal's obituary notice, February 1874, p.45, only the Dictionary of National Biography notes: "At one time Parris carried on a life drawing school at his house in Grafton Street, Bond Street" (vol.15, p.369). Neither does McDonald (op. cit.) mention Parris.

76. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.259.

77. This assertion is not confirmed by other sources on these artists, however: Carpenter's education is said to have been got through studying Lord Radnor's collection (Dictionary of National Biography, vol.3, p.159; Art Journal, January 1, 1873, p.6), while Gillies is said to have had lessons from Fred. Cruickshank and a period in Ary Scheffer's studio (Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.91; Roget, op. cit.,

vol.2, p.372), and Corbaux is credited with having studied at the British Institution and National Gallery (Dictionary of National Biography, vol.4, p.495; Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.68; Englishwoman's Review, August 8, 1857, p.12).

78. See, for instance, "Lady Art-students in Munich", Magazine of Art, 1881, p.343; "The Girl-Student in Paris", Magazine of Art, 1883, p.286; "An Atelier des Dames", Magazine of Art, 1886, p.152; "How Working Women are trained abroad", Englishwoman's Review, January 1880, p.38.

79. Howitt had already been in Germany with her family as a girl: her mother recalled: "My eldest daughter, who desired to devote herself to art, had never forgotten the profit and delight which she had derived from our visits to the German capitals and their works of art. Our visit to Munich and the studio of Kaulbach had especially impressed her mind and imagination... Anna Mary felt that Munich and Kaulbach would afford her the most consonant instruction, and in May 1850 went thither, accompanied by a fellow-votary, Miss Jane Benham" (Mary Howitt, An Autobiography, ed. Margaret Howitt, London, 1891, p.56).

80. "Free Art Education for Women in France", Woman, April 20, 1872, p.273 and April 27, 1872, p.290; comparisons between the situation of French and British female artists were made from quite early on in the period, usually to the disadvantage of Britain. The success of Bonheur in this country must have gone a long way to suggesting such a comparison, and in 1861 the inclusion in the Society of Female Artists exhibition of several French exhibitors encouraged critics to bring the comparison up again. The exhibitions at the French Gallery in Pall Mall, organised by the dealer Gambart from 1854 onwards, familiarised the public with the work of Henriette Browne, as well as with Bonheur and numerous male artists. The fine art establishment in France confronted the question of women artists some years earlier than its English equivalent did: in the Athenaeum's report of the 1855 sitting of the Permanent Commission of Fine Arts in Paris, a stirring paragraph is devoted to Jeanron's championship of women artists in the face of the establishment's discrimination against them (Athenaeum, January 6, 1855, p.18).

81. In the later part of the period under discussion here, when numbers of women had been to France for artistic purposes, the French influence showed itself additionally in different ways: the Art Journal in 1871 carried a notice of a new school, "conducted after the manner of the schools at Paris.." run by a M. Yvon, while Woman's Opinion in 1874 had the Society of Female Artists exhibition reviewed by a Frenchman (March 28, 1874, p.58 and April 18, 1874, p.68) and the Slade was modelled on French lines (see below).

81. Art Journal, January 1872, p.10.

82. Englishwoman's Review, August 15, 1877, p.379.

83. Art Journal, 1877, p.317.

84. The identity of the writer is not apparent, and the initials do not correspond to any of the signatories of the subsequent memorial; they may, indeed, not be genuine or, given typographical efficiency in that period, even accurate.

85. Athenaeum, March 12, 1859, p.361.

86. The Society of Female Artists' establishment, two years previously, must be seen as adding credence to such a claim; Ellet's book did not appear in Britain until the end of the year: could this writer have had prior knowledge of this, perhaps?

87. Athenaeum, April 30, 1859, p.581.

88. These artists exhibited, respectively: not known, 1850's/70's, 1850's/60's, 1850's, 1852/66, 1860's, 1854/83, 1857/86, 1856/78, 1857/65, late 1850's, late 1850's/60's, 1845/64, 1850's, 1845/88.

89. Jameson, Sisters of Charity and the Communion of Labour, London, 1859, with a preface addressed to Lord John Russell; the former part had been published already in 1855, and the latter in 1856.

90. There were only two female signatories to the original memorial of November 1768 to George 3; later, Roberton Blaine in his evidence to the Royal Commission on the Academy of 1863, makes the same mistake (see below).

91. Jameson, op. cit., p.xliii.

92. Art Journal, June 1, 1859, p.166; Carpenter had been an established artist for forty years, and was used as an example in the arguments that were to ensue over women's qualifications for Academy recognition: see the evidence of Roberton Blaine to the 1863 Royal Commission, below.

93. Jeaffreson, op. cit., p.72; the date of Herford's accession to the Schools is sometimes given as 1860 and sometimes as 1861: this confusion results from the fact that she was accepted as a student in the meeting of 21 December 1860, but did not start at the Schools until 1861.

94. Englishwoman's Review, April 1871, vol.6, p.101;

95. G.D. Leslie, Inner Life of the Royal Academy, London, 1914, p.42.

96. See H.C. Morgan, A History of the RA Schools, University of London, 1968, App.IX. Poynter, in fact, should also be seen in this light, as head of the Slade schools from 1871/5, and of South Kensington from 1875/81. Burchett seems, from available accounts, to have been a particularly encouraging party for women: Thompson recalls him very enthusiastically in her autobiography (Thompson, op. cit., ch.4) and Clayton records Grace Cruickshank's positive memories of him (Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.253), while the memorial bust of him now in the Royal College of Art was made by a female student of his, Henrietta Montalba: he was head of South Kensington from 1851/75. Sparkes did a lot for women in the applied art field, by encouraging and fostering their

work at Doulton's, the china manufacturers: see Callen, op. cit.

97. Athenaeum, March 2, 1861, p.298.

98. Jameson, op. cit., p.xliii; "my lord" is Lord John Russell, to whom the preface is addressed.

99. E. Poynter, Ten Lectures on Art, London, 1879, Lect.3, p.111.

100. This bears on the difficult question of the class of the women who studied art in schools other than the Royal Academy: the use of the word ladies here, implies someone who would be less earnest than another sort of female. See below for the context of this question of class.

101. "University College Art Schools", Woman, February 3, 1872, p.35; on this question, see also J. Jackson Jarves, "The Nude in Modern Art and Society", Art Journal, March 1, 1874, p.65, as another manifestation of the discussion on the subject provoked by the increasing activity of women in art.

102. Royal Academy Council minutes, vol.12 (December 18, 1861), p.52; Pevsner tries to draw a parallel between the Academy's early introduction of female models and a progressive attitude to female students, but has to admit that such a parallel does not exist, since the Academy displayed a markedly unprogressive attitude to female students (N. Pevsner, Academies of Art past and present, Cambridge, 1940). According to modern (feminist) interpretation, however, such practice on the Academy's part - of using female models and discriminating against female students - is not contradictory, but consistent, with a view of women as non-executive accessories to the creation of art by men.

103. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.80.

104. Art Journal, April 1, 1873, p.104.

105. Athenaeum, June 27, 1857, p.825.

106. Spectator, February 16, 1861, p.165. Frances Palgrave, writing in 1865, while claiming that women's lack of proper education had kept them back in art, did not allow that lack of study from the nude had substantially hampered them ("Women in the Fine Arts", Macmillan's Magazine, 1865, p.123).

107. Royal Academy Annual Report, 1894, p.18, quoted in Sidney Hutchinson, The History of the Royal Academy, London, 1968, p.143; for personal reflection on this matter, see Jopling, op. cit., ch.1.

108. Illustrated London News, February 9, 1861, p.177.

109. Royal Academy Council minutes, vol.12, May 14, 1863, p.138.

110. Figures from Jeaffreson, op. cit., p.72; the ins and outs of the RA minute-keeping are difficult to square exactly with Jeaffreson's figures, but certainly admitted before the clamp-down were Herford, Helen Mary Johnson, Emily Burford, Rosa LeBreton, Louisa Starr, Catherine Edwards

(later Sparkes), Edith Martineau, Constance Phillott, Harriet Aldham, Janet Rolfe, Helen Thornycroft (daughter of the sculptor), and Annie Ridley. The list of their proposers gives an idea of whence male support was coming in the first flush of victory over the Academy's intransigence: Herford prop. Heatherly, Johnson prop. Heatherly, Burford prop. Heatherly, LeBreton prop. J. Williamson, Starr prop. Heatherly, Edwards prop. A. Cooper, Martineau prop. Heatherly, Phillott prop. J.H. d' Egville, Aldham prop. Cary, Rolfe prop. not known, Thornycroft (both) prop. J. Foley, Ridley prop. M.W. Ridley.

111. Royal Academy Council Minutes, vol.12, p.139ff. See Morgan, op. cit. also. Figures from the Annual Reports give numbers as follows (student intake, painters/ sculptors/ architects): 1863, 24/8/5; 1864, 26/10/6; 1865, 20/3/6; 1866, 24/5/5; 1867, 20/4/13.

112. The memorial can be found in full in the Anderton album, vol.26, in the Royal Academy library. The signatories, those at least with legible signatures, were Inskipp, Humphreys, Davidson, Kemp, Wallis, David, Coode, Stuart, Mulready, Goldsmith, Charretie, Harriotte, Vaughan, Seymour, Gantrey, Ware, Pocock, Aldridge, Shepherd. In 1867, female students still in art schools submitted a memorial asking that the ban be lifted enough to let the number of female students remain constant. This was accepted on April 2, 1867.

113. That year, these artists had had the following works on show at the RA: Ward, "Queen Mary quitting Stirling Castle"; Osborn, "Private and Confidential", "Sunday Morning, Betzingen", "Slow and Sure", "A carriage and pair"; Solomon, "Good Night"; Martha Mutrie, "Camellias", "Foxgloves"; Annie Mutrie, "Azaleas", "Autumn".

114. Art Journal, November 1, 1863, p.230; the Art Journal returned to the question a few months later, insisting that "Justice, reason, public opinion, and gallantry alike demand that the Royal Academicians should reconsider their determination." (May 1, 1864, p.154). The Athenaeum reported the arguments for amd against: "Of course, this 'reason' (given by the Academy, of shortage of space) is only a courteous excuse. We believe it is the intention of the Royal Academicians, should they get room enough, to open a school exclusively for ladies...." (April 2, 1864, p.477).

115. Times, May 26, 1862, p.10.

116. ibid, May 22, 1866, p.12.

117. Report on Commissions, etc., 1863, vol.27, p.302 (328)ff.

118. ibid, p.491 (517).

119. Examiner, March 3, 1871, p.229 referring to the paper's re review of the SFA exhibition, February 25, 1871, p.204.

120. See Royal Academy General Assembly minutes, Elections volume.

121. Thompson, op. cit., p.107.

122. Jopling, op. cit., p.69.

123. Or jealous: Jameson had remarked, in 1859, that "... the first attempt of women to enter on a new sphere of industry is invariably met by any associated body of men, whose privileges or whose gains appear to be threatened, in a spirit of the most angry antagonism. The immediate feeling is, not to welcome us as helpers and associates, but to put us down as rivals and interlopers; and this spirit is not confined to gangs and unions of vulgar uneducated artisans, or boards of jealous poor-law guardians; it is to be found in Royal Academies of Art and Royal Colleges of physicians..." (Jameson, op. cit., p. vii).

124. There were no such people; Honorary Members were first created in 1770, but there were at no time any female Honorary Members. See Hutchison, op. cit.

125. Clayton, op.cit., vol.1, p.389.

126. RA Annual Report, 1879, p.20; nevertheless, the privileges they were to get (number 9, in the minutes) included eligibility for Professorships and pensions. See Royal Academy Council minutes, November 4, 11 & 18, 1879. The Athenaeum reported the situation, as: "female artists shall, with Her Majesty's sanction, become RA's and ARA's in exactly the same manner as male artists, but that the former shall not be eligible as teachers and visitors in the schools or partakers of the annual dinner..." (February 7, 1880, p.191).

127. W. Frith, My Autobiography, London, 1889, p.472.

128. Starr was never allowed to forget it: critical appraisal of her works after 1867 hardly ever failed to mention her early success, and often implied that she had not fulfilled the promise that showed. McGregor's win allowed more comment on the female membership question: "It is very gratifying to find in this list the names of three young ladies, one of whom, Miss McGregor, stands at its head as a gold medallist. She is not the first, and is not likely to be the last, to merit that honour. How much longer, it may be asked, will the Academy refuse to admit females to the highest positions in the profession? (Art Journal, January 1, 1872, p.29).

129. Jopling, op. cit., p.154; Frith wrote in 1889, "now they are almost equal in number to the male students, from whom they constantly carry off prizes" (Frith, op. cit., p.469).

130. Reported in the Englishwoman's Review, January 1868, vol.6, p.396.

131. Johnson is reported to have said, in connection with women preaching, "It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all." For an exposition of this idea applied to women's creative abilities, see Cynthia Ozik, "Women and Creativity: the demise of the dancing dog", Woman in Sexist Society (ed. Gornick and Moran, NY, 1971, p.431.)

132. F.D. Maurice, "Female School of Art; Mrs. Jameson", Macmillan's Magazine, 1860, no.9, vol.2, p.227. When this article appeared, it was one manifestation of the mobilisation of support for the School which, in 1860, was threatened with closure when the Government subsidy which enabled it to function, was withdrawn; for others, see the Spectator, March 31, 1860, p.305 and the Art Journal, February 1, 1860, p.61.

133. Quoted in Quentin Bell, The Schools of Design, London, 1963, p.111.

134. ibid, p.135.

135. Art Journal, March 1, 1872, p.65.

136. William Dyce required that students should state their future or intended employment in order to guard against aspiring fine artists joining the Schools' classes: see McDonald, op. cit., p.151.

137. Athenaeum, January 22, 1853, p.116.

138. Art Journal, February 1, 1860, p.61; the education of artists was seen, throughout the period (but especially so in the 1840's and 1850's) as relating very closely to the education of the public (in art): see, for instance, "The Education of the Artist and the Public", The Builder, December 4, 1852, p.766, a report of a speech by Richard Redgrave.

139. This is in distinction to the Female School at South Kensington, which was the women's part of the South Kensington branch school, evolved in the 1852 rearrangements.

140. The Builder, April 28, 1860, p.268.
For accounts of such events in the press (almost unanimously sympathetic to the cause and often condemnatory of the Government's action), see the Spectator, June 23, 1860, p.601; Art Journal, March 1, 1861, p.62; Illustrated London News, July 2, 1864, p.17. In 1862, the Queen became the School's patron (sic), followed by Princess Alexandra in 1863.

141. Art Journal, February 1, 1860, p.62.

142. Jeaffreson, op. cit., p.70; in 1872, the Art Journal wrote of 117 art schools, but Government School may not necessarily have been meant (below, p.137). See McDonald (op. cit., p.383) for a list of dates when individual branch schools were established.

143. For example: Stoke (1851) 69m, 42f; Hanley (1851) 75m, 23f; Worcester (1851/52) 114m, 43f; Belfast (1851/2) 267m, 29f (figures from Art Journal reports). No order emerges in the figures as the decade proceeds.

144. Reported in the Art Journal, February 1, 1849, p.53.

145. ibid, January 1, 1847, p.24; the School's head, Fanny McIan, defended her pupils before the Committee in 1847, against the arguments based on class economics: "... there has

never been a pupil in the London School during the time which we were located in Somerset House whose object in coming to the School was not to get their livlihood" (quoted in Bell, op. cit., p.135).

146. Illustrated London News carried a report on the progress of the Camden branch school in 1852, (January 17, 1852, p.46) saying: "Associated with this subject there is an advantage which, to many persons, will appear of equal or greater importance than the cultivation of taste among men - we mean the opportunity which it affords to women for the lucrative employment of their time in a manner suited to their tastes and domestic character", while the Spectator, writing on the Female School in 1860 under the title "Employment for Women", reported that "Since 1852, 690 students have entered themselves at the school, and the number at the present time is 118, of whom 77 are studying with the view of maintaining themselves. These are chiefly of the class who would otherwise swell the rank of governesses who oppress the tender-hearted readers of the Times advertising columns" (March 31, 1860, p.305).

147. Maurice, op. cit., p.228; somewhat earlier, an interesting article appeared in Household Words in 1851, by Richard Hengist Horne, (fig.59), specifically on the Female School, which was laudatory of the staff and students of the School but very sarcastic as to the credit that could be claimed by the Government agencies: "I thought very much about these Schools - and especially the Female School, as it seemed to me to include many questions of social interest, which one now so often sees discussed in periodicals, and even in newspapers. Many of these young persons, thought I, are, no doubt, of highly respectable families, well educated, and who once had very different expectations; though now, for the purposes of making designs, they are learning drawing, perhaps, to sell them - perhaps that they may become teachers - but in all cases to help some scanty income at home. Perhaps, also, some of them are orphans. But the Government takes charge of them. As the manufacturers have not yet learnt the importance of supporting these Schools, by employing some of the students, or making selections from their designs, a paternal Government has kindly and wisely taken charge of these industrious and praiseworthy young women" (R.H. Horne, "The Female School of Design in the Capital of the World", Household Words, no.51, March 15, 1851, p.578).

148. Horne, op. cit., p.580.

149. Reported in the Art Journal, August 1, 1856, p.252.

150. Art Union, December 1, 1848, p.366.

151. "Art decoration, a suitable employment for women", Art Journal, March 1, 1860, p.11; the Graphic was most sensible about the question, saying "The pupils may be following art as a profession, or merely as a pastime, but it is clearly the object of the school that in either case they shall have

the benefit of a secure educational foundation. No pains have been spared to dispel the illusion - less prevalent in the present than in the past, but still not wholly suppressed in all quarters - that, almost of necessity, a measure of insecurity and incompleteness must underlie all women's work" (January 13, 1872, p.39).

152. (Eliza Turck) Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.148.

153. Bell (op. cit., p.139) discussing the 'success' or 'failure' of the Female School, says: "The invasion of the schools by the middle classes was one of the most disconcerting things that had to be considered by the authorities, and in the end, it was that invasion which, to a very large extent, determined their character."

154. Reported in the Englishwoman's Review, January 1868, no.6, p.396.

155. ibid, November 15, 1877, p.509; see also a report in the Art Journal, 1, 1871, p.95, on an address made by EVB to the Frome School.

156. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.242.

157. Thompson, op. cit., ch.4.

158. Illustrated London News, October 10, 1863, p.336.

159. Art Journal, January 1, 1871, p.17; of the students mentioned here, Selous (who became Fennessy in 1873) and Pocock rendered themselves favourably conspicuous in the London exhibitions during the remainder of the decade.

160. ibid, April 1, 1871, p.138.

161. Jeaffreson, op. cit., p.52; the encouragement of women to take up the applied arts was only as various as it was persistent: see, for instance, the Athenaeum urging women into illumination (May 21, 1859, p.684), the Art Journal pressing them to engage in engraving, china-painting, glass-staining, etc. (March 1, 1872, p.65), or the Englishwoman's Review recommending photography: "Any employment which has its main requisites in delicacy of manipulation, patience, and carefulness, with a greater or less degree of refined or artistic taste, is pre-eminently suited for women - and this is precisely the character of photography" (July 1867, p.219). Equally, see "Female Employment", The Leisure Hour, January/June, 1860, p.15; and "Woman's Industry", The Leisure Hour, March 23, 1854, p.179, wherein a great range of activities possible for women is suggested, including china-painting, designing buttons and different forms of sewing, the article concluding: "(These topics) may, perchance, help some woman-worker in determining wherein her talent and true calling lies; and it may suggest ideas to others, who may strike out some new sphere of usefulness and industrial activity, or raise some desponding mind to renewed efforts of industry and self-dependence."

162. Art Journal, April 1, 1871, p.138.

163. Poynter, op. cit., Lecture 3, p.95.

164. ibid, p.111; although the Illustrated London News announced, in its notice of the school's establishment, that "The structural arrangements allow for the separate admission and accommodation of female students, if such separation should be thought desirable" (Illustrated London News, September 2, 1871, p.215. The Art Journal reported in 1874, that "An evening life class has been established in the Slade schools, University College, under the sanction of Professor Poynter, ARA, to meet the requirements of lady artists whose professional engagements prevent them from attending the classes held during the day" (December 1, 1874, p.373) - doubtless this was also of benefit to lady artists whose domestic engagements encroached on the time they could spend on art.

165. McDonald, op. cit., p.269.

166. In her article on "The Slade Girls" of 1883, in the Magazine of Art, Charlotte Weeks makes especial mention of Pickering, Greenaway, Hilda Montalba, Jessie McGregor, Edith Martineau and others as being former students of the Slade who had, by the time of writing, "obtained a position of standing among the artists of the present day" (Magazine of Art, 1883, p.329).

167. ibid, p.325.

168. Poynter, op. cit., Lecture 7, p.189; delivered at the opening of the Slade's fourth session. These lectures demonstrate clearly the modern academic position, which pays much heed to the opinions of first-generation academicians (Reynolds, Fuseli, etc.) but still finds room to take Ruskin seriously and to side with unequivocal representatives of Realism (Legros, for instance, who succeeded Poynter).

169. Poynter, op. cit., Lecture 3, p.114; Poynter made a great distinction between an imitative stance in the face of nature (which he would call Ruskinian) and a creative one (which he thought was truly artistic). For a summary of Poynter's aesthetic position, see The Slade 1871/1971, exhibition catalogue, Royal Academy, November/December 1971, p.5.

170. Weeks, op. cit., p.329.

171. ibid, p.325; also relevant for women, was Poynter's attempt to cease distinguishing between amateur and professional, as far as tuition went (op. cit., Lecture 3, p.110).

172. Art Journal, March 1, 1872, p.65.

173. The 1870's saw this situation changing, and Tessa MacKenzie's publication of 1895, The Art Schools of London, shows what a difference the next two were to make.

174. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.80; the author of "Sisters in Art" had rhapsodised thus about such as Fox: "... women, true to the great needs of their age, have risen themselves up out of the old formulas unselfishly to teach their sex, and lead them on the angel-way of human good" (op. cit., p.364).

175. Jopling, op. cit., p.266.

176. Tessa McKenzie, The Art Schools of London, London, 1895, p.80; this author also gives an account of Jopling's school.

177. Englishwoman's Review, February 15, 1877, p.52.

178. Ward, Memories, p.196.

179. Ellet, op. cit., p.209.

180. Waterford to Boyle, February 23, 1880, quoted in Augustus Hare, The Story of Two Noble Lives, London, 1893, vol.3, p.400. The two artists were cousins and friends (fig.60): see below, ch.6, p.595, n.164.

181. Englishwoman's Review, November 15, 1877, p.510.

CHAPTER 3: EXHIBITION

Given the development in the mid-century period of the status and scope of women's art, the field of exhibition, when scrutinised methodically, illuminates that development in a vivid way. Baldwin's sketcher (fig. 1) was not expected to display her work - except for the approval of eligibile bachelors - nor to sell it; and, since showing and selling were understood to go together, for the most part, she hardly ever broached exhibition. The commercial function of public exhibition was acknowledged by exhibiting societies and bodies to varying degrees, but it, in fact, underlay nearly all shows of artwork. (Even amateur exhibitions were often fund-raising, when not positively commercial.) So, despite the fact that the catalogues of, say, the Old Watercolour Society exhibitions, did not include prices of works, it had always been the intention that visitors to those shows should purchase the works on view; similarly, the British Institution catalogues did not carry prices of works before 1852, and the New Watercolour Society catalogues give prices only from 1853, yet all along the aim had been to sell the work on show. Since it was considered highly unbecoming of a lady to earn money from any of her activities, and even worse to seek to earn money therefrom, while being indecorous to draw attention to herself in any public sphere, public exhibition was not the logical destination of her work, even were it considered 'good enough', so professional female exhibitors, such as Carpenter or Harriet Gouldsmith, were few and far between.[1] Amateur exhibition was a slightly different case, because it did not pretend to seriousness or commercialism, but still the condition of showing work might be decorous anonymity (or the use of the title 'A Lady'). The amount of work from female hands which actually saw the public light of day, so to speak, in the rooms of the Royal Academy, British Institution, Society of British Artists (Suffolk Street), Old and New Watercolour Societies, and the halls of Norwich, Bath, York, etc., was, therefore, undoubtedly only a small proportion of the work which women were, in fact, producing, but which a combination of modesty, economic content, and lack of encouraging precedent destined rather for the album or the parlour

walls than for the exhibition-room.

(It would perhaps be more accurate to say, lack of visible precedent; for, though women exhibited with, for instance, the Old and New Watercolour Societies, in small number in the 1830's and 1840's - at the British Institution and the Academy also - they received negligible attention from the art press and the type of works women of this period showed tended to be that which, habitually, commanded little critical interest - that is to say, watercolour still life and fancy pictures, landscape, and portraiture.[2] One of the most marked effects of women's increasing participation in the exhibition-rooms during the mid-century is the increase in press coverage which women artists received.)

When, therefore, in 1857, a Society of Female Artists arose, it demonstrated that, not only were women engaged in painting, drawing, and sculpting, but also, that their work was such that they wanted to publicly display and, furthermore, sell it;[3] that they were prepared, for the most part, to become not only visible but known, and that in some cases they even nurtured an unladylike desire to become famous. With the Society of Female Artists, the relation of women's work to men's, and women's relation to the defined standards of art, became an issue which had not seemed to exist when the numbers of women involved had been so small as to seem negligible. Exhibiting female artists, largely ignored in the madding male crowd, were treated, when they were noticed, - by critics, confrères, and each other - as a race apart, more so as they became an issue, their work being reviewed in separate paragraphs (though some critics graduated from this debateably useful catagorisation, as the time went on), even though their work was not hung in segregation, and their presence at art-world functions neither required nor missed. Neither did women artists - because of social convention- enjoy that social opportunity, outside the gallery, beyond the newspaper column, of self-exhibition, which supplemented so

effectively an artist's showing in the exhibition-room (an opportunity which male artists uninhibitedly had); so that the woman artist's exhibiting was practically the only way in which she became visible - before the Society of Female Artists, the level of that visibility was low indeed.

The competition of the art-world was perhaps more manageable in the provinces, in one's home town - familiar territory - than in London, because less worldly. Before 1857 there were, by and large, more female participants in provincial shows than in any London show. Provincial towns established art societies - both for the practice and the exhibition of art - for a number of reasons; Trevor Fawcett accounts for the rising tide of regional art interest in the immediately pre-Victorian period, thus:

> "The players, the professional artists, wanted above all an exhibition. Not <u>any</u> exhibition, however, but one of modern British art, where they could set out their wares and hope for sales - or, if not always immediate sales, then at least the publicity and recognition that would gradually lead to future commissions and sales. They wanted the glamour of an exhibition, a point to which they could bend their efforts throughout the year, a display ground for their rival talents. Pride as well as the economic motive played a part; pride as a professional body of artists, a local analogue of the Royal Academy, as well as individual pride. The professional recognised too that exhibition could raise personal standards and were of substantial benefit to the young artist." 4

As for the professedly amateur, the following preamble to the Amateur Artists' show in London in 1853 (the fourth such) suggests the attitudes of the non-professional painter up and down the country:

> "It was neither to gratify vanity, nor to enter into competition with the professional artist that the Amateur was solicited to forsake the privacy of the drawing-room or studio, and the flattering approbation of personal friends, for the publicity of an exhibition-room and the unreserved criticism of the world. It was

> the belief that Amateurs would derive much advantage by the comparison of their work with those of others, and thereby be enabled to perceive errors committed, correct their taste, and be spurred on to increased effort towards perfection. It was the design, too, of encouraging by example many a timid lover of Art, showing him (sic) how by study, perseverance, and proper instruction, he might, as others have, accomplish works which he would not be afraid to submit to public judgment. It was the hope also of instilling a feeling into all visitors, whether friends of the amateur or not, that to create a taste for the beautiful in Art is not over difficult, and that to learn to draw is as useful and as easy as to learn to write or to learn music, and ought to be, as much as either of them, a part of education, particularly of those who have the opportunity which wealth and leisure afford." 5

The second of these, if not the first, many a lady (the word is used advisedly) had in over-abundance, and increasingly the middle-class female had it too, given the aspirations of the middle classes in this period to the pattern of living which saw the idleness of womenfolk as a mark of elegance and opulence; so that it must have been as much through boredom as through artistic fervour that many female artists first took up the brush (though later on, as has been shown, it was economic necessity that was a frequent motivator). By 1830, however, both bored and artistic women in Norwich, Edinburgh, Bath, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Gloucester, Ross, Bristol, Plymouth, Exeter, Southampton, Brighton, Bradford, Hull, Newcastle, Carlisle, Whitehaven, Dumfries, Glasgow, Greenock, Aberdeen, and Cork 6 had the opportunity to show their work in public among other artists' work, and to ask money for it too.

However, throughout the period under discussion - and still today, surely - it was London that was seen as the arena of real performance, and the provinces more of a testing-ground for the ambitious or the natural horizon for the modest or the limited. In the conventional mind, women fell necessarily into this latter

category - modest and limited - but for some women it was the capital which was their home territory, not the provinces, and so where else should they exhibit but at their local shows: the Royal Academy, the British Institution, et al? All the London shows were always richer in London artists than in out-of-towners, although of all the London societies, the Society of Female Artists showed the least imbalance in this matter. At the start of the period, 1850, the RA showed fewer than 100 provincial artists in an exhibition representing 843 artists; in the same year, the New Watercolour Society showed 11 provincial artists among 57; the National Institution had 13 provincial artists our of 85; while the Society of Female Artists, in its first show, included 22 provincial artists in a total of 149. At the same time, the more prominent provincial shows, which gained prestige as the mid-century proceeded, were also patronised by London artists, and one reads, at times, of a definite unease, on the provincial part, that the local talent might be overwhelmed or outshone by the attendances of artists from the capital. But it was very often the case, that a London-based artist would send work to the provinces which had already run the London circuit; the London shows thus bagging the new works and the provincial exhibitions receiving them as echoes of of their London success. [7]

Since it was the London circuit which was the field of the most important art activity, this examination of the exhibition situation will concentrate on the London shows, in the light of the comments already made above about the national context. The following piece from Fraser's Magazine of 1861 (written by William Michael Rossetti) indicated the richness of the London field in the period under discussion:

> "The London exhibitions, recurring in annual series or severally for a single season as the occasion may arise, form a goodly list. This year, besides the Royal Academy, which rises first to every mind, we have had, of regular annual exhibitions of the current art, the British Institution, the National

category - modest and limited - but for some women it was the capital which was their home territory, not the provinces, and so where else should they exhibit but at their local shows: the Royal Academy, the British Institution, et al? All the London shows were always richer in London artists than in out-of-towners, although of all the London societies, the Society of Female Artists showed the least imbalance in this matter. At the start of the period, 1850, the RA showed fewer than 100 provincial artists in an exhibition representing 843 artists; in the same year, the New Watercolour Society showed 11 provincial artists among 57; the National Institution had 13 provincial artists our of 85; while the Society of Female Artists, in its first show, included 22 provincial artists in a total of 149. At the same time, the more prominent provincial shows, which gained prestige as the mid-century proceeded, were also patronised by London artists, and one reads, at times, of a definite unease, on the provincial part, that the local talent might be overwhelmed or outshone by the attendances of artists from the capital. But it was very often the case, that a London-based artist would send work to the provinces which had already run the London circuit; the London shows thus bagging the new works and the provincial exhibitions receiving them as echoes of of their London success. [7]

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Institution, the British Artists', the Female Artists', the Architectural Exhibition, the two Water-colour Societies, the Crystal Palace Collection, and the semi-public collection at the Hogarth Club. Foreign contemporary art has been shown in the French Exhibition and the German Academy, old masters and deceased British painters in the second collection at the British Institution. Special miscellaneous exhibitions have been got up by Messrs. Sotheby and Wilkinson, by Messrs. Leggatt of Cornhill, and that of watercolours at the Society of Arts, in aid of the Female School of Art. Besides these, there have been several exhibitions by individual artists - in sets, by Mr. W.B. Scott, Mr. Desanges (the Victoria Cross Gallery), Mrs. Bodichon, M. Cordier, the Royal Pictures by Messrs. Phillip, G.L. Brown, etc., and the works of the late Mr. Cross; single works by Mr. Holman Hunt (with some accessory subjects), Mr. Barker, and Mr. Dowling... We may roughly estimate the number of works at some six thousand or upwards, of which about four thousand would be new performances by artists of the British school." 8

The Society of Female Artists must take pride of place in the following survey, since it was that body which was most significant for women artists in the period; the other exhibiting societies will be considered from the viewpoint of the female artist's situation, a comprehensive survey of the histories of the RA, BI, etc., being neither intended nor attempted. It is worth noting at the outset, however, that, despite W.M. Rossetti, the general state of London exhibition was widely considered unsatisfactory:

"There is no foreboding the degree of badness to which with well-directed effort, an English exhibition may be made to attain..." (1853) 9

"A long annual interregnum has hitherto prevailed in art from the closing of the Academy in July to the opening of the earliest exhibition in the succeeding February... for the public it is anything but desirable, more especially for visitors and foreigners, who would scarcely know in what direction to look for a compendious sample of living art..." 10

The Society of Female Artists was established in 1857, due largely to the efforts of Harriet (Mrs.) Grote. Elizabeth Eastlake, in her memoir of Mrs. Grote, reported:

> "It was owing also to her exertions and liberality that the Society of Female Artists was set on foot in 1857. She engaged the interest of many friends, both in the form of contributions and patronage. But Mrs. Grote herself, with the late Mrs. Stanley - not to omit Mr. Grote, who became guarantee for the rent of the exhibition-room - were the main and indefatigable workers of an Institution which, however modest in its pretensions, remains active and useful to this day" (she was writing in 1880). 11

The genesis of the Society is difficult, not to say, impossible, to follow: Harriet Grote herself made no mention in her own writings of the growth of the project or its eventual achievement, restricting herself to a brief comment in the year after the Soceity's debut (1858):

> "The month of January saw us established in London, where we stayed until May. At this date after having started my Female Artists' second Exhibition of Paintings, I took my departure for the Continent, to avoid the further fatigues of the London season proper... Whilst at Nancy I received a letter from my valued friend Mrs. Stanley, who was kind enough to watch over our artists' interests during my absence..." 12
> (In 1858, the SFA exhibition opened in early April). 13

The archives of the Society - which continues to the present day as the Society of Women Artists - were destroyed in the Second World War, offering therefore no further insight into the actual creation of the Society, from primary sources. Despite the absence of immediate documentary evidence, however, the Society's establishment can be seen as a reflection of the growing numbers of women anxious to show their work (see table) but unsatisfied with the conditions of exhibition which prevailed, by which they

were discriminated against; and as a move to extend women's working (and therefore earning) possibilities. But why the instigator should have been Harriet Grote, and why the scheme came to fruition in 1857 (rather, say, than earlier in the decade when the row over the Watercolour Societies' unfairness to women burst forth - see below), can only be speculated upon. It is the case, however, that discontent with the Royal Academy, which had been rife since the beginning of the decade, reached a particularly outspoken level in 1856, and a letter published in the Builder in May that year, from "a very estimable artist", went so far as to specifically suggest that a solution to that institution's dominance was, for artists who felt themselves hard done by - this would obviously include female artists - to organise for themselves:

> "... the answer is, that bold and united efforts must be made to break down the long-established usages to which the Academy clings,.... that the large body of artists who stand without, must combine for their universal safety and success, and seek some means to take the tide of patronage while at its flood, hoping it may yet last long enough to bear them on to a permanent haven." 14

The absence of comment upon the Society's establishment in the recollections of those whom one would have expected to be interested parties (for example, the Howitt family, Anna Jameson, Barbara Bodichon), however, perhaps, should be seen as an attitude of ambivalence to the scheme among artistic feminists of the time. Once established, however, the Society and its progress become easier to chart. The first exhibition was held at 315, Oxford Street, from June 1st until July 18th, with hours of 10 till 7 daily, admission being one shilling, with a charge of sixpence for the catalogue. Such charges were standard on the London circuit. The exhibition contained 358 works, submitted by 149 artists. It had been anticipated in May by the gossip column of the Illustrated London News:

"NEW SOCIETY OF FEMALE ARTISTS - A society has been set on foot with the object of collecting the works of female artists into an exhibition for sale. This exhibition will open on the first of June, and will comprise, along with the productions of painters by profession, some contributions from amateurs, not a few of which are understood to possess distinguished merit." 15

And thus by the Art Journal, with more positive enthusiasm:

"LADY ARTISTS' EXHIBITION. - Arrangements are in progress for opening an exhibition of paintings and drawings by ladies, professional and amateur. It will be, we understand, of a high order and manifest a truth which is becoming every day less questionable - that in the Fine Arts women are capable of great achievements. All our exhibitions of late years contain abundant proofs in support of this belief; and although it may be expedient to gather their works into one collection, we cannot consider that they have been unfairly or even 'ungallantly' dealt with in any of the existing exhibitions. We shall probably be, ere long, better enabled than we now are to report on this novel project - a project which cannot fail to be interesting and agreeable." 16

While the Spectator's anticipation of the opening, in the same month, was even firmer in its support, placing the notice under the heading "More Employments for Women" and writing:

"The admission of female artists to the established exhibition societies is limited; and although it may be true that the sex has produced no great painter, with only one Rosa Bonheur, it is equally true that it has produced a Lady Waterford, a Mrs. Donovan, and a Mrs. Boyle (fig.60). The art of drawing and painting is a most pleasing accomplishment, but it is more: it disciplines both eye and hand; it teaches the mind exactness; it helps to fix the memory and illustrate the communication of thought... The new exhibition will afford to

professional ladies an opportunity both of showing their competency and of selling the pictures and drawings that they may produce; and in order to render the collection yet more attractive, several ladies of known taste and proficiency have promised to contribute their own works." [17]

Two issues fundamental to the existence of the Society, which were to prove consistently contentious throughout the SFA's career, were raised in these pieces: namely, the standard of the art produced by women, and their treatment by the art establishment - in other words, the grounds on which women artists declared themselves separate from male artists. [18]

It is through considering critical appraisals of the Society that the issues it raised can best be discussed, for the Society itself, its members and participants, hardly ever raised their voices in public to argue their case or explain their activities, it seems; so that the various aspects of observing opinion - be that derived from a critic, journalist, or representative of another society - are the arguments on which examination of the SFA's significance can most effectively be based. A survey of the reviews that appeared of the first exhibition, in 1857, will indicate the range of critical attitudes which the press consistently applied to the Society, over the years. To start with, a gallant encouragement, couched in often patronising terms, was the order of the day. [19] As time went on, a petulant or angry note crept in (particularly on the Athenaeum's part), and the very existence of the Society was brought into question, the point at issue being most often, whether or not women received fair treatment from other branches of the art establishment. More and more often, after the first few years of the Society's existence, critics complained about the standard of work (some papers even ceasing to review the shows [20]), about the absence from the Society's ranks of established women artists (particularly the Art Journal), and their tone became one of weary tolerance or gallantry hard-pressed, although the low or uneven standard of work was

acknowledged as bearing heavily on the artists' lack of education. Criticism which analysed the ideological questions raised by the Society was quite rare (the Art Journal and the Spectator were conspicuously more sympathetically far-sighted than other periodicals or papers) and, since most of the reviewers were male, it is not surprising that, even where a greater understanding of the politics of the thing was evident, the ultimate verdict was one of reform, at the most.

Most critics assumed, from the outset, that there was a double standard for male art and female art - that they were almost distinct phenomena, in fact; and this was the premise from which their criticism of the SFA started. Some evidently assumed that the Society meant, itself, to assert this; thus the Illustrated London News' critic on the first show:

> "Classification is the necessary consequence of the great expansion of art-production in our own times: it therefore gives us pleasure to see the commencement of a series of exhibitions calculated to show the female talent in this country. With so fair a commencement we cannot doubt that they may take a permanent hold on the public attention. Strength of will and power of creation belonging rather to the other sex, we do not of course look for the more daring efforts in an exhibition of female artists: but observation, taste, or the art of selection, and various other qualities adapted to the arts, are to be found in this Oxford-Street display." 21

The Times' critic followed the same line:

> "Such a revelation of artistic enterprise on the part of the fair sex is, of itself, a remarkable fact, and there is no apparent reason that (sic) it may not prove the beginning to a great result. Nor have the artists confined their energies to the more ladylike branches of art - to the production of fruit and flower-pieces... That we had lady-artists of course everybody knew, but that we had lady-artists who could fill a

> large room in Oxford Street with creditable works is a fact that is now made known for the first time." 22

The Englishwoman's Review, in its critique of the show, fell upon the negative consequences of working from such an assumption as these critics displayed:

> "The account of the above (SFA) exhibition, which we quoted from the Times in our last impression, may probably have led our readers, as it did ourselves, to form no very high expectations of the collection to which it related. The manner in which its merits were discussed, was calculated to make us believe that the pictures were, on the whole, of that class which it is rather a charity to patronize than a pleasure to contemplate, and which the critic, however much he might praise them from motives of courtesy or philanthropy, would neither look at a second time himself, nor very warmly recommend to his intimate friends." 23

The writer continued, to hint that there was a case for analysis; which,among male critics, the Art Journal's reviewer did engage in:

> "It was a bold experiment of these ladies to challenge, on behalf of their sex, a title to public favour as an associated body of artists, able to produce works which might fairly be worthy of notice. Yet it is quite evident that they did not over-estimate their own powers, nor need they appeal to the forbearance of the critic to deal leniently with them, nor to his gallantry for his approbation and encouragement... It has been too much the custom with a certain class of connoisseur, real or pretending, to speak disparagingly of the productions of female artists - to regard them as works of the hand rather than of the mind - pretty and graceful pictures, but little else. Yet when a Rosa Bonheur, for example, astonishes the world with a "Horse-Fair" (fig.61), or a herd of half-wild oxen, then we hear from the same lips some such

exclamation as this:- "Clever - very clever, but decidedly unfeminine!" so that these lady artists often have occasion to sing, in the words of the old ballad - 'What shall we poor maidens do?" Between the absence of due appreciation of the one side, and the sneers of the other, it is difficult for them to hit the right mark. Moreover, the obstacles which lie in the way of their receiving an Art-education that will qualify them to undertake works of a higher order are not sufficiently taken into account by those who assume to be their judges..." 24

Such responsible and well-meaning analysis was to be characteristic of the way in which the Art Journal treated the question of women artists in all its ramifications during the next two or three decades. Even so, Art Journal contributors were not immune to the prevailing prejudices of the time, and cannot be seen soaring in progressive glory over their chauvinistic colleagues in skies of unsullied liberalism; but they showed a more generous understanding of the position in which the artists showing in the Society's first exhibition stood, than did, say, the Illustrated London News, or Punch, which latter displayed in the crudest manner the common prejudices that have already been remarked upon, in its review of this first exhibition, in 1857, (fig.57):

"Those who are fond of 'The Soceity of Ladies' will rush to No.315 Oxford Street, and there enjoy an exhibition that is the result of female handiwork. It is not an exhibition of stitching or embroidery, such as shirts made at home, or anti-macassars, or floral smoking-caps or butterfly braces, or sporting slippers with a series of foxes running helter-skelter over the toes. It is not an exhibition of Berlin-wool work, or potichomanie, or any other mania that occasionally seizes hold of young ladies' fingers, and makes them, for the time being, excessively sticky to squeeze, as though you were shaking hands with a Sub-Editor in the full agony of paste and scissors. (25) It is not an exhibition of jams and jellies, or marmalades, or preserves, or much less, pickles. You must not expect you are about to be invited to a choice collection of pies, or tarts, or cakes, or

> puddings, of a most marvellous sweetness, such as is generally imparted by white-looking hands that are more in the habit of playing with the keys of the piano than the keys of the storeroom. Nor is it wax-work with its mossy baskets of blooming fruits, such as would certainly tempt birds to come and peck at them, nor vases of paper flowers, so faithfully rendered as actually to cause maidservants to water them. It is nothing to eat, nothing to play with, nothing to wear, nothing that you can adorn your magnificent person with. It is simply a collection of 358 works of art, that have been contributed exclusively by the talent and genius of English ladies." 26

The Athenaeum showed a similar, if more dignified, tendency to ridicule in its review of the new Society:

> "It has so long been our impression that old women legislated for English Art that we were surprised to hear that a new Exhibition had been started in consequence of the unjust exclusion of ladies from our Watercolour Societies. By themselves the works of female artists will be better appreciated. We only hope that this Exhibition is no result of those ridiculous, wrong-headed pretensions which have led in America to almost a war of sexes, as in the old Amazonian wars that the Greek artists have loved to record. Vegetables, cottage homes, fortune-tellers, and such small deer (sic) not to mention many thousand babies in all stages of growth, form the chief attractions of the Exhibition..." 27

Withal, the first year of the Society of Female Artists was reckoned to be a successful inauguration of a good idea, and the Secretary of the Society waxed optimistic in the press a week before the exhibition's close:

> "The Committee are (sic) gratified to announce, that the success of the first Exhibition has fully equalled their expectations, and they confidently hope for still better results in the coming year, when the existence and purpose of the Society shall have become more widely known." 28

The Art Journal lent its support to this - "If the first season of the existence of this society may be accepted as an augury of its future, the institution may be said to be established" - but ended on a note that proved prohpetic: "We earnestly hope that no 'apple of discord' may impair its utility." [29]

At the end of the year, however, the Art Journal had to report that:

> "An appeal for public subscription in aid of this society has appeared in the daily journals - much to our regret... Art, in a country like ours, ought in no instance, especially where a body of ladies is concerned, to be in the position of requiring eleemosynary aid" [30]

and a few months later, the Illustrated London News demonstrated, in its greeting of the second SFA show, that the Society's progress was not going to be untroubled in other ways. The basic conflict between what one could term the establishment and the female avant-garde was then articulated quite clearly:

> "Why a Society of Female Artists? In the field of Art, as in that of Poetry, (31) one would think that the two sexes might hold their ground on equal terms, without any fear of unfair dealing. And is it just the best way of maintaining the 'rights of women' for them to withdraw in this declared manner from association and competition with their brother artists?... many ladies send agreeable contributions to the exhibitions in Regent Street, Suffolk Street (Pall Mall), and Trafalgar Square, and find them well-treated there. Then why this exclusive exhibition of art - this petticoat republic? And what would the fair members think, if, in revenge, the gentlemen were to interdict them from their premises? Now, whilst we see no reason to apprehend anything so ungallant as what we have just suggested, we must state that we very much question the existence of any necessity for this movement of the female artists, and more than doubt its producing any good results to themselves or to the arts generally." [32]

The writer of this petulantly naive complaint was obliged to return to the field some ten days later, enlightened if not chastened:

> "Some observations we made in the course of a former brief notice, questioning the necessity for this establishment of female independence and exclusiveness in art, have called forth rejoinders and explanations from several correspondents who, we must admit, make out a very fair prima facie case in behalf of the ladies. It is alleged that the old-established exhibiting societies either wholly exclude female artists or admit them to an extent wholly inadequate to their requirements; whilst none allow the favoured few admitted to have any share either in the management or the profits of the concern. Add to this that the works of female artists are to a great extent of a special class, and so small in dimensions as to run the risk of being lost amid the more obtrusive claims of a general collection, (33), and the occasion and purpose of a distinct exhibition appear to be satisfactorily established. In proof of the alacrity with which the opportunity thus afforded has been accepted by those to whom it was offered, it would suffice to state that 272 female artists take part in this second annual exhibition of the society, contributing in all nearly 600 works." 34

Some interpreted the women's attempt at autonomy as secession from the field of exhibition through cowardice, believing that the women's complaints of sex discrimination at the hands of societies other than the SFA were either fallacious, or exaggerated, and should not the alleged mistreatment be seen as more of a challenge than a discouragement? Thus the Examiner as late as 1871:

> "The exhibitions of this Society do not give a fair representation of women's powers of painting, and its constitution will prevent its ever taking a very high place. Comparatively few of those ladies who have made their names known as artists send pictures; it may be because they shrink from supporting a project which, by its very existence, seems to admit inferiority in women, and an inability to cope with the other

> sex in the realm of art. The profession of painting, at any rate, is one in which the sexes stand upon the same ground with equal chances." 35

And, similarly, the Art Journal the previous year:

> "The difficulty has always been to induce ladies who are strong enough to win an equal place with men in other galleries to take here the side of the weaker sex. This failure in power of attraction for women whose works are superior to the accident of sex, must always tell against an exclusively female exhibition." 36

The Illustrated London News showed again how unable, or unwilling, it was to understand the reality of women artists' situation:

> "None would deny to female artists the proud privilege of competing on equal terms with the votaries of art of the other sex in the ordinary exhibitions."... "We have reason to know that if the work of any female artist has sufficient merit to offer the least chance of sale it will be received and considerately, nay, indulgently, hung on the walls of any exhibition in London." 37

Such a show of obstinate belief in the integrity of the art establishment - and such a revelation of its mercenary nature - was occasioned, it seems, by an underlying, unarticulated feeling on the part of some critics that the Society of Female Artists was a good thing in the modern circumstances, but, in principle, somehow, just not right - that as long as a Society of Female Artists was seen as having a place, something must be, fundamentally, wrong, the system must not be working properly. It is questionable how many of the critics who ventured to express their opinions of the Society's shows understood its point of view, and their own points of view shifted throughout the Society's career, depending on an uneven logic that was obviously confused by the developments of feminism at large (which they saw

as bearing on the SFA). William Michael Rossetti, for some years reviewer for the Fine Arts Quarterly, illustrates this typical lack of coherence on the fundamental and the circumstantial questions the Society raised simply by its existence; he wanders around and around the points at issue, but never really gets anywhere:-

> "To call this or others of the Ladies' Exhibitions satisfactory to the artistic or critical sense would be neither true nor really complimentary to the ladies themselves, who may at any rate be credited with sufficient appreciation of art to know what a success is, and consequently what is not a success. The policy of distinct female exhibitions might probably with little hesitation be pronounced altogether erroneous, were it not for the one practical consideration that, if the ladies did not exhibit by themselves, they would too likely be crowded out of other exhibitions, or so inconspicuously placed that the important fact of the effort that a certain number of women are making to establish a standing in art would sink out of public observation. Considering this, we are inclined to think that the ladies have a fair show of reason for starting and maintaining an exhibition of their own. On any other ground, we should decidedly deem it a mistake; and especially on the ground that art is a matter of capacity and attainment, not of sex; that such few women as have attained ought to come forward among their peers, who are artists of the male sex; and that the large number who have not attained, are scarcely, in a female exhibition, supplied with the great incentive of emulation. They can paint very indifferently indeed, and yet keep head above water according to the level of the separate Female Exhibition; and this is no shame for the present to the ladies, but a necessity of their case." 38

Rossetti does show, more than many of his colleagues, indeed, a willingness to sympathise with difficulty where it existed and to grant it, however contradictorily, special treatment. But the point which nearly all critics of the SFA stumbled on, continually, was the women's exhibitions' relation to other mixed exhibitions

as it evidenced itself in the sort of artist who contributed to the Society's shows - or, rather, the sort of artist who did not. There was a continuing stream of reviews, starting in the early '60's, pointing out the absences in the ranks, of women who had achieved some recognition in other galleries, and this factor was seen by critics as considerable proof that the SFA had little justification for being; or, at least, that its justifiability was thereby put seriously into doubt, unless it was just seen as a nest for lame ducks. The Spectator, for instance, on the 1861 exhibition:

> "... it must not be forgotten that this exhibition does not fully represent the position of art amongst women; there are several distinguished lady artists whose works do not adorn the walls of the Society. Mrs. E.M. Ward, Mrs. Benham Hay, Miss Osborne, Miss Solomon, Miss Naysmith, Miss Mutrie, and Miss Susan Durant in sculpture, are some of the names which occur to us as having a reputation in the Academy Exhibition, yet it is to be regretted that some pictures by these ladies do not lend their support to an exhibition which represents ostensibly the talents of the female artists of the day..." 39

> "Interesting as is this fourth exhibition - one which any man may visit with pleasure, and without those references to 'sex' which are always so many covert assumptions of superiority - it still imperfectly represents the state of female art and amateurship in this country. Some of our known lady painters exhibit; but more are absent; to name merely four without any research - Steers, Setchel, Corbaux, A.A. Watts (40). Nor can we be contented with a muster of amateurs which does not include Bridgman Simpson, Burr, Barker, and some of those delicate designers only known by their initials." 41

Thus the Athenaeum on the 1860 show; and the Illustrated London News, on the 1865 show:

> "The visitor must, notwithstanding, still be cautioned against accepting this gathering as affording anything neara fair criterion of the capabilities of the female artists of this country, seeing that at least a dozen of the most eminent are absent..." 42

But, in the light of this trend, critics perversely took to smacking the hands of those women who did stay aloof from the SFA, exhorting them to support it:

> "Why, we would inquire, do not the leaders in the ranks of the lady-artists come to help their sisters? Some few, it is true, have done so. Rosa Bonheur and Henriette Browne have each sent contributions which, if small, are invaluable. A mere sketch from the portfolios of some ladies who obtain laurel crowns elsewhere, would give to these walls the attraction they want. Why these supporters have fallen away it is not our province to conjecture." 43

> "... the leading 'lady' painters have not, with some honourable exceptions, upheld it by contributions... We earnestly urge upon all painters of the 'gentler sex' to give it support..." 44

> "... still many of our best known female painters abstain from contributing - an abstinence which, we must be permitted to say, is neither politic in their own interest nor considerate of the interest of their weaker sisters." 45

A rejection of this line of criticism - which could, it seems, not conceive of the possibility that the Society's success in establishing women as artists might well be seen as <u>increasing</u> in direct proportion to the number of women who forsook it for the 'open market', so to speak - came from a source sympathetic to the SFA, the <u>Englishwoman's Review</u>:

> "Complaints are made that ladies of acknowledged talent send their best works to other exhibitions. These seem to us unreasonable. What should we say if a writer who can earn £5 to

£10 by writing an article for the Time or Pall Mall Gazette were blamed for sending his (sic) articles there instead of to some penny newspaper? Writers begin by writing for penny papers and small magazines, and then if they have talent they rise, and are in time promoted to write for the best newspapers and magazines. A beginner, however, is glad of admission for his or her articles into the cheap newspapers and small magazines, and would rather earn 5s. a page than nothing at all. In the same way a young artist is glad of the opportunity of exhibiting her pictures in the room of the Female Artists' Society, and of the chance thus afforded of selling them. Some people like to read penny newspapers and sixpenny monthlies, and some people like to buy cheap pictures. For our own part we could spend a good deal of money with great pleasure in purchasing pictures in the Female Artists' Exhibition. If we had a limited amount of money and wanted to buy pictures to decorate our drawing-room we should go there to buy them. If our supply of money were unlimited we confess we should go elsewhere. If we wanted a newspaper and could afford it we should take the Times, but if we were poor we should take a penny print, and be glad there were such things as cheap newspapers. We make these remarks in consequence of several criticisms in the newspapers, showing that quite a wrong view is taken of the use of the exhibition, which is to assist and encourage youthful talent to develop itself, and at the same time to supply the public with what the public likes - i.e. cheap pictures. Here can be bought the works of rising artists, whose pictures ten years hence may be worth large sums, and whose early efforts, containing no small share of merit, will then be valuable not only for their own worth but also because they bear the name of a distinguished painter. It is, however, hardly to be expected that when these ladies have achieved celebrity they will continue to send their best pictures to the Female Artists' Exhibition." 46

(A very material consequence of this was that, as this writer implies, women's pictures could be seen as cheap commodities: a review of the SFA show of 1874, by 'A Frenchman', in the magazine Woman's Opinion, pointed this out as a negative factor that

should be thought about:

> "I find 600 subjects exposed to view there, furnished by about 300 lady artists; and if I add up the price for each work of art, quoted in the catalogue, I arrive at a total of £6,000. There is no need for me to make any comment upon that fact, but none the less, do I find a great significance in it." 47)

It is likely, given the sympathy that existed between the Review and the Society, that the view expressed here is that of, at least, a sector of the SFA itself... However, admission of such an ambition did the Society's credibility as much harm as good, since it allowed outsiders to confirm their ill-concealed suspicions that the SFA was nothing but a collection of 'small-beer daubers' floundering with importunate shrieks in a mire of amateurship, dilettantism, and strong-mindedness. That the Society was a springboard for women artists, not a cage for them, was not acknowledged by most regular critics.

In practical terms, the Society led a chequered career: it moved yearly from site to site until 1860, after which it stayed at 53, Pall Mall, the galleries of the New Society of Painters in Watercolour, until 1862.[48] From 1863 to 1866, the exhibition was held just along the road, at 48, Pall Mall: this was seen as a consolidating move:

> "The Society of Female Artists has entered a new and improved phase of existence this year; it appears, for the first time, as an independent body, having a gallery for exhibition of pictures, and also, we are glad to learn, for the holding of a drawing school, in the very convenient locality of Pall Mall, no.48. We may consider the body as adolescent, if not adult, and congratulate the ladies interested upon the success of their efforts so far." 49

Despite impressions that the lease at no.48 was for seven years,[50] the Society moved yet again in 1867, to the rooms of the

Architectural Association, Conduit Street, where it remained for several further years.

The practicalities of commerce, too, went through some experimentation: from 1859, prices of works appeared in the exhibition catalogue, making the intention to sell more frankly evident. Before that, the Society had used the not unusual habit of retaining a man [51] in the gallery with prices noted down, of whom one made inquiry if one wished to purchase. From 1859, too, the structure of the Society was made clear in the catalogue: names of the Committee (8), those of Members (24), and of Honorary Members (8) were listed. (Honorary Members were also exhibitors.) The Committee decreased in number progressively until there were only two Committee members in 1864 (Harriet Grote and Jenny Lind Goldschmidt, who had served since the Society's inception). Perhaps for this reason, there was a 'reorganisation' in the following year, 1865, whereby Patronesses were introduced into the catalogue, headed by the Duchess of Cambridge and supported by a veritable panoply of the female aristocracy, including such as the Marchioness of Waterford and Lady Eastlake, who had a recognised link with the visual arts. [52] The Athenaeum noted the change in procedure at some length:

> "This is neither more nor less than complete reorganisation, upon a basis that is essentially professional, to the exclusion of that 'lay element' which seems not to have worked harmoniously with the more practical section of the association. 'Distinguished patronage' has not been found so useful, nor even so honourable to its recipients, as was anticipated; consequently, on certain disagreements as to matter of management, and, as we are informed, the influence exercised by amateurs, the body was dissolved, afterwards reconstituted, and, except in a strictly honorary and exterior position, without the 'lay element' in its councils. It seems to be the old story over again; good-natured personages condescending from their own ranks to manage the affairs of others and those others invincibly repugnant to be managed or patronised in any fashion. We congratulate

> the Society on the change from a weakly and dependent state of existence, to that which may be weak, but is certainly independent, healthy, and honourable." 53

It must be concluded from the above, that the aristocratic patronage (or should one say, matronage) declared in the 1865 catalogue, had existed before this, as a 'power behind the throne' (perhaps resultant from the appeal for financial aid made at the end of the Society's first year) and the presentation of these names in the 1865 catalogue was meant to testify resoundingly to their changed (and lessened) status. That this reorganisation was not, however, as effective as was perhaps hoped, might be inferred from the appearance in 1867 among the Members of a Management Committee, numbering seven. This faded from sight after 1870, however. The need of a society - which failed to be self-supporting and which many regarded as an organisation to be patronised and humoured - for altruistic financial support, was shown all too clearly from 1867 with the advent into the catalogue of a list of life subscribers -

> "A Donation of 5gns. will constitute a Life Subscriber, entitling the Donor to admission for Self and a Friend to all the Private Views and Exhibitions of the Society. Life Subscriptions will be devoted to the formation of a Fund for the use of Professional Members in case of accident or temporary illness"

- in which the male names outnumbered the female to a conspicuous degree (nine men and seven women); and whilst the female subscribers were all exhibitors of the Society - prominent among them were Bodichon and Fox [54] - the men, necessarily, had had a much less intimate connection with the institution and therefore less identification with the spirit of the enterprise. [55] By 1872, these Subscribers had swollen in number to 33, and the preponderance of men over women had increased. This was the most effective way, indeed, in which a man could express his sympathy with the Society: by sharing his (economic) power and by lending his credibility (a credibility which derived not only from his

gender but also from that economic power).

The different strands of the foregoing discussion of the SFA come home to roost in the Art Journal's critique of the 1869 show, a summing up, in a way:

> "Partly philanthropic and partly artistic, it has obtained, as it deserves, considerable sympathy and support. Its funds are replenished by subscriptions and donations, its exhibitions receive contributions from both artists and amateurs. An association constituted for these good ends has a claim to be treated with tenderness, and the works sent to the gallery may be received with kindliness, rather than judged by strict critical standards. Yet among the 483 drawings and paintings here on view, there are many which need no apology." 56

It was an assessment of the work presented by the Society which, ultimately, caused critics the most trouble. The mingling of professional with amateur work has already been remarked upon, and this in itself was against the grain, for it called into question the dividing line between those two precious categories. Another aspect of the work which seemed problematic was the copies. They were allowed before 1861, but were thenceforward disallowed. [57] The role of copying in women's art will be discussed below in Chapter 5, but suffice it to say here, that the admission of copies was seen to lower the standard of the exhibition immeasurably, and there was a general critical sigh of relief when copies were no longer allowed to sully the walls of the exhibitions. The Athenaeum's critic wrote in 1861:

> "... the ugly copies have totally vanished, and hideous transcripts from Correggio or Turner offend not the public eye on these walls. This is a relief. All the pictures, however bad the mass of them may be, are the independent perpetrations of the artists, for which no-one else, except perhaps the fathers, husbands, or brothers, who have been the types for imitation frequently chosen, is responsible." 58

Here the family connection is seen casting its shadow, as it did so often, on women's work; amidst the common prejudices about women's art - that it had certain qualities, that it adopted a certain scale and form, that it occupied certain genres - that the SFA exhibitions called up from critics, this one of women's work being necessarily derived from male paradigms was one which the Society challenged most directly, by setting women's work apart from men's. Also, what women's art was expected to be, could be contradicted by the evidence of the Society's shows. The effect of highlighting the sex of the artists and therefore of their work - the Society of Female Artists - was, however, not necessarily, in practice, one of enlightenment or reassessment:

> "Although our fair painters doubtless desire only honest and impartial criticism - fair play and no undue favour - the very name of their society so appeals to our masculine feelings of gallantry and sympathy that it is difficult not to be a little blind to faults, and a little more than justly enthusiastic in expressing our admiration of merit." 59

And, unequivocally, it is clear that critics brought male-defined standards of what was good and what was bad to bear on the Society's shows; the standard generally accepted in other exhibitions was seen, as has been evident above, to be the one that women should be willing to be judged by, even though at the outset, it was a widely held belief that women's art was appreciably different from men's work. It was as if, as long as women artists stayed on mixed ground - which is to say, as long as they were content to be second-runners - they would be judged by a special standard (a lower standard); but once they tried to establish their own ground, they had to meet the general standard. This process had the effect, reassuring to the prejudiced male, of explaining why they were ignored in mixed artistic company and why they could be ignored when in segregation: in neither case were they 'good enough'. Thus, it is not surprising to read this sort of verdict on the Society:

> "This society shows a persistence worthy of the best of causes. Undaunted by discouragement, it ever renews virtuous efforts, and whatever may be wanting in point of Art finds compensation in good intentions... The beneficent managers of the 'Society of Female Artists', though they rightly spurn commiseration, deserve, indeed, encouragement." 60

It obviously failed to command respect as an artistic body, among commentators in the press, anyway. One can recall, too, Lady Eastlake's apologetic verdict on the Society quoted above. What, then, if anything, did the Society of Female Artists achieve?

Most obviously, it increased the opportunity for exhibition and sale that women artists might enjoy: these two factors are acknowledged in early reviews of the Society's shows: "... there is no reason that we know of, why young or moderately able artists should not have an opportunity of exhibiting their works and selling them, if possible, for what they are fairly worth"... "The third exhibition... is an improvement on its predecessors, and the public have acknowledged it by a good attendance, and the purchase of nearly £400 worth of pictures already..." [61]. At the time of the Society's inception, there were six other principal exhibiting bodies in London: the Academy, the British Institution, the Old and New Watercolour Societies (the latter of which became the Institute), the Society of British Artists (Suffolk Street), and the National Institution (originally the Free Exhibition). These were variously discriminatory towards women, as will be described below. [62] There were, too, the charitable amateur shows (and had been the Amateur Exhibitions), the various winter exhibitions which were sometimes related to and sometimes independent of the Societies, and the Crystal Palace exhibitions from 1856, while the role of dealers such as Gambart, Wallis and Flatou as exhibitors was on the rise. Later on in the period, the setting up of the Dudley and the Grosvenor galleries increased the exhibition space open to women, but there was no establishment, among all of these, which favoured women equally with men, in terms of the numbers of works shown and the amount of administrative

or policy-making power given. During the period being here considered, none of the foregoing exhibitions (either on average or in particular) showed as many female artists as did the SFA, which in its peak years included in single shows over 200 women artists.[63]

The Society provided an outlet for the work of artists who felt unable to show anywhere else in London, thus increasing the total number of both artists and female artists showing their work; the incidence is high, in its shows, of artists whose interest in or attempt at exhibition was erratic or short-lived, and an exhibition-space which allowed for that unevenness was particularly valuable to women, with their routines subject to sudden changes like childbirth, marriage and widowhood. Because it was a specifically female arena, for many who made art either casually or seriously it presented an opening which they found more attractive (either in terms of propriety or of competition or of ideology) than other exhibiting bodies. During the period 1850 to 1879, there were nearly 300 women who exhibited at the SFA while appearing to have shown nowhere else in London (except perhaps at the less publicised charity shows) - that is to say, that many artists whose work appears to have surfaced only with the Society.

This is not categorically to deny that such artists might have exhibited locally, however; and another positive effect of the Society was to bring to London the work of artists who had previously shown only in their home towns or regional centres. (It must be said, however, that critical opinion often held that such work was better left completely unexhibited, — never mind at all it being encouraged to quit those suburban shadows! Thus,

> "Many others (works), however, are of a quality which, although enjoying the paid-for right to so much wall-space, should, in the interests of the cause of female art, never have been publicly shown...."

"In the present exhibition, consisting of 300 and odd subjects, there are, perhaps, a score or so works so pleasing and creditable as to be entitled to a distinguished place in any exhibition, but they are a decided minority; and the great bulk of the works by which they are surrounded are of a sort not to present the least claim to attention beyond the immediate circle of the friends of their producers.'..."

"A very large number of tame pictures give needless prominence to many that are hideous..." 64

The selection of exhibits was, undoubtedly, conducted on a liberal and amicable basis that was ill-informed about professional standards and perhaps uncertain as to how rigorous to be, neither plumping wholeheartedly for the beautiful nor the true. This was one of the main dissatisfactions which gave rise to the re-organisation of the Society in 1865.)

There were, too, many women who, first or early exhibiting with the SFA, went on to spread their wings in the realms of other London societies, the SFA thereby providing a springboard for women wanting to enter the art establishment. The Claxton sisters (Florence and Adelaide), spring to mind as examples of this use of the Society: they both exhibited firstly at the SFA, then went on to attempt the Royal Academy and the National Institution, the Crystal Palace and then the Dudley exhibitions. They both continued to show at the Society of Female Artists, however, after being accepted in other shows, whereas not a few women whose first steps were taken at the SFA later disdained it when they were accepted elsewhere. [65] This must have been due, in some measure, to the low standing which the Society continued to have with critics, but need not, in any case, be seen as the negative that critics would have it to be.

The Society also brought into discussion, as has been demonstrated, issues concerning women's participation in the visual arts which, theretofore, had been practically unarticulated. Not only the

particular issue of unfair treatment by other exhibiting bodies, but also questions about 'female art' or femininity in art and, ultimately, about artistic standards - what is great or even good art, and how is it recognised? - and about art education, were made visible by implication with the Society's existence, even if direct engagement with those questions was resisted by many. In 1857, critics displayed their established opinions about women artists unthinkingly, but their continuing contemplation of women's art, brought about simply by their having to review the SFA show every year, led them to be more aware of women's art appearing elsewhere, and to reassess or modify, in some cases, their prejudices and their methods of judgment. The Illustrated Times, for instance, in its 1864 review, said:

> "We must confess to having in anticipation feared a direful contest between our gallantry and our critical honesty. But, truth to tell, there is far less to find fault with than we had expected, and we hasten to express our pleasure at having been so agreeably disappointed." 66

While the Athenaeum critic, having blithely stated in 1858:

> "Summing up the characteristics of female art, we find it tender and refined, but essentially unimaginative, restricted, patient, dealing chiefly with Blenheim spaniels, Castles of Chillon, roses, firstborns, Zillahs, camellias, ball-dresses, copies, and miniatures. In transcript painting, as to truth, detail, patience, and love, it is capable of every triumph, but it can never reach the robust or the exalted. We may have a female Fra Angelico, but never a female Buonarotti," 67

had by 1870 had his verdict contradicted to some extent: "Though still moving in accustomed paths of Art, it is evident that, however tardily, the painters whose works appear here are advancing..." 68 It was, surely, to some degree, the case that women's art had improved as it had because of the attentions of such as the Athenaeum critic, who had given such strictures as

his 1859 comment that "the sex that has produced 'Aurora Leigh' should attempt something beyond sketches of genteel fishermen and cherubic striplings, black-eyed as Don Juan and beautiful as Narcissus"; though, quite simply, their capabilities improved, also. The SFA's exhibitions presented that critic and the public at large, with work which could not be legitimately comprehended by such descriptions as those which were offered by the press in 1857, to which the usual critical vocabulary could, not, without reassessment, be applied. Thus, observations like the following became more and more common in the artistic press, in response not only to SFA shows but to women's work seen elsewhere, also: "... a very spirited work - we were about to say, for a lady; but ladies now paint with as much power as the other sex..." (Elizabeth Jerichau's "Danish Shepherd with dogs and sheep", 1859); "Though by a female hand, it is essentially a masterly picture. It has all the general excellence which skilled male Art could have brought to its illustration..." (Ward's "Queen Mary quitting Stirling Castle", 1863) (fig. 18); "... worthy, we will not say, of a 'female artist', now a term of contempt - it holds its place strongly by its genuine pictorial merits" (Osborn's "Lost", 1870) (fig. 13).[69]

A more torturously-achieved effect of the SFA - though consequent of the points noted above - was to bring attention to some particular individuals who would not otherwise perhaps have achieved much notice - rather, who would not otherwise have received their fair share of attention. Because of the uneven quality of work in the Society's shows, critics looked for the best, in order to be able to praise where they could. Thus, a few artists found themselves drawn into the spotlight to serve as comparative example or examples to their weaker sisters: Ward, Henriette Browne, Elizabeth Murray, the elder Mutrie, were most often picked out, not necessarily in the Society's shows, but wherever they appeared, as illustrations of how good women's art could be. If these artists appeared in exhibitions other than the SFA, they came to be noticed there because they were there

and not at the SFA; so a work shown by a woman at the RA, say, might well be noticed in the early '60's by a critic who would have passed it by, before the advent of the SFA. In fairness to the majority of critics who concerned themselves with these matters, let it be noted that they often obviously strived to notice a creditable woman's work or a laudable female artist, from a mixture of gallantry and patriotism, if not from any more progressive motive.[70]

The Society's artistic significance was felt, too, in its efforts to improve women's training in art. Aside from its significance artistically, however, the Society's ideological importance must be considered. It was certainly seen, at the start, as a feminist movement - if by that, one can mean that it was seen to be a blow struck for women's rights; and, although the names associated with its establishment do not read as a list of front-line 'women's righters', and one should not assume that any woman who supported the Society necessarily supported the feminism of the late 1850's, the fact that the SFA's womanpower included Harriet Grote (who was one of the speakers at the first public meeting on women's suffrage, in 1869), Bodichon, Mrs. Roberton Blaine (whose husband was one of the few witnesses to the Royal Commission on the Royal Academy to recommend increased rights for women),[71] and that it counted among its exhibitors Parkes and Ellen Blackwell, indicates that the Society had the blessing of progressive women of the mid-century. Later writers documenting this period have also seen the Society as part of the women's liberation movement of the time:

> "... women were finding duties for themselves in the most diverse spheres of life. They were asking themselves questions which would never have occurred to their grandmothers. Why, for example, were so many of their children sickly? Why was there so much prostitution? So much hysteria and hypochondria? What were the hereditary diseases, and how could they be checked? What were the conditions of women in factories, Poor Law institutions, and lunatic

> asylums? Why were there no women supervisors in all these places? Seeking the answers to these questions, they formed themselves into committees for Sanitary Reform, for Moral Regeneration, for Factory Inspection, and every other kind of social improvement. And when society was exhausted, the arts and sciences unfolded new fields of conquest. Why were there so few women artists, (72) and so many poor commercial designs? Why were there no women doctors, and so many women's ailments? The Society of Female Artists was formed. The Women's Medical School in America was studied with increasing interest and envy..." 73

Yet it would be ultimately impossible to infer from the running of the Society, the work displayed, or its manner of self-presentation, any precise political, let alone, militant premise; the evidence for such a conclusion is not apparent, however much such a conclusion would seem probable. In the '60's, the preponderance of aristocrats and upper middle-class persons among the Society's supporters, combined with its apparent acceptance of rather low standards of achievement within its shows, could allow one to suspect that, in fact, the Society became rather less than more radical in its aims and in its practice, also, as it proceeded. The impression remains - and, in the absence of the Society's records, it can only be an impression - that the intention at the time of the Society's origin, was for a body of a more militant character than, as time went on, the SFA did actually betray; even so, however, Lady Eastlake did the Society less than justice when she encapsulated it as "an Institution which, however modest in its pretensions, remains active and useful to this day."

The other contemporary exhibiting bodies in London will be now considered in a roughly chronological order of establishment, rather than in order of status, though the longest-lived was also, as the period opens, the most prestigious.

The Royal Academy, established in 1768, enjoyed a dictatorship of

the fine arts not only throughout the mid-century but beyond.

> "Academicians enjoy many privileges and exercise far-reaching powers, which closely and often prejudicially affect the art and artists of the kingdom, (While) the ordinary unprivileged artist is absolutely without consideration and devoid of power: nay, worse than that, he (sic) is at the mercy of men whose chief concern is the prosperity of their society, - the Academy, - and the protection of their own interests rather than the advancement of art and art education. As a fact, Academicians are completely masters of the position; and knit together, as they are, by the powers and privileges they enjoy - that is, by a common interest - they present, for defensive purposes at any rate, a compact and powerful phalanx, to the helpless and heterogeneous mass of incompatible units, who constitute the body of outside artists." 74

Laidlay's words express, at the end of the century, this predominance in the way that many felt it, in the 1850's. The letter published in the Builder in 1856, already referred to with regard to the SFA, is worth quoting at length for an indication of the vigour of opposition and the sincerity of the will to change which the state and practice of the Academy aroused:

> "... In the present collection, it is said, that 27 feet of the line are taken up by one member; as much by a second; about 30 feet by one associate, and nearly as much by another; and mainly, too, by works of a class much resembling each other, and not all tending to illustrate the high aim and purposes of art; while the works of striving men, out of the circle, are consigned to the cella. Is it thus that art is to progress amongst us? Is it thus that England is to hold up her head among the schools of Europe, or to maintain her position as foremost among the patrons of the ennobling, and elevating, and refining arts of peace? Surely not: and it becomes a question of the highest moment to the artists themselves, whether they submit to a state of things so uncertain and so deceitful; or whether they cannot combine for

> action in such a way as to secure more certainty in the management of the public exhibition, which is nothing more than the fair opportunity of exposing to view what fair and intelligent means, and honest labour of mind, have produced... the answer is, that bold and united efforts must be made to break down the long-established usages to which the Academy clings, - that its administration, so cramped and illiberal, must be made to adapt itself to the requirements of the age in which we live; - that it must be aroused from that lethargy which makes its onward movement so tardy..." 75

Despite such fulminating - or perhaps in proof of it - the Academy predominated over the other exhibiting bodies, overshadowing them in size and duration of shows, and remaining their exemplar, although the Free (later the National Institution), the Old Watercolour Society [76], and the SFA, were set up specifically in opposition to elements of its policies. Its annual shows were the biggest in the country by far, the total number of works in any one show frequently rising to one thousand and some hundred. Its hegemony was inescapable:

> "Art: the great advent of the year in pictorial art is coming upon us, and all lovers of the brush and pencil are looking forward towards next week for the sight of new indications of our artist-talent..." 77

Work by members of the Academy (Academicians and Associates) was automatically given a place in the exhibitions, but work by outsiders ran the gauntlet of selection by a panel of members, works being submitted anonymously; and hanging was also expedited by members, (fig.62).

Within an Academy show, members were preferred to non-members to a degree far surpassing the distinction made in other societies: members' works were hung on the line or in the best positions and were treated as the chief interest of the show, so that outsiders played the also-rans to members' frontrunners. Bad hanging was

a frequent point of complaint with artists and reviewers, alike: if a work were hung near the floor, or 'skied' at the top of the wall, or put in a dark room, the work might be noticed by very few and <u>seen</u> by even fewer (fig.63). Critics frequently complained that bad hanging prevented a fair assessment of a work:

> "Perhaps, however, the most unjustly hung drawing in the Academy is 201, 'Kynance Cove, Cornwall', by Miss Anna Blunden of Exeter, a little work full of beauty. It is placed at the very top of the wall, and its colours, like the glorious colours of its great original, are lost in the distance..."
>
> "... Mrs. Bridell's 'Arab Marriage', being hung high, is not so easily appreciated."
>
> "'Departing to join Garibaldi' - Volunteers embarking on one of the North Italian lakes; very true, apparently, and unaffectedly painted, but hung too high for proper examination." 78

When the victim was female, additional complaint could be made against the insensitivity of the hangers:

> "This picture had two claims upon the RA's who distributed the pictures; first, because it is a very commendable work; and next, that it is the production of a highly talented and assiduous lady. Perhaps they have hung it so because they have a professional pique against E.M. Ward esquire, RA, her husband and their brother member. Who knows? anyway, and whatever the motive, it is very unfairly hung ...(this) is by some thought to add want of gallantry to want of taste... Looking at the unmitigated rubbish which has been hung upon and near the line in other parts of the exhibition, it would be absurd to urge as an excuse for the 'hanging committee' that there was no room for Mrs. Ward's picture, and we cannot but think that kindness to the wife of a fellow Academician, if not the common politeness due to a lady, should have secured her better treatment." 79

Outsiders' work, however, was always conspicuous by number, if

not by placement, for numerically non-members nearly always surpassed the members, so that the bulk of a show would consist of outsiders' work. To take a random example, in the 1862 exhibition there were 1142 exhibits, of which 146 were by Academicians and Associates, and 996 by outsiders. It was sometimes protested that Academicians rather neglected, in fact, to show work at the shows, the implication being that RA's were content to rest on their laurels and not actually 'produce the goods', relying on outsiders to provide the wherewithal for an exhibition. William Rossetti, thus, observed in his review of the 1864 Society of British Artists' exhibition that,

> "All the thirty-one members exhibited, their contributions amounting in all to 141 works, or something below a seventh of the whole. This, it will be observed, is relatively nearly double the proportion of the Academician contributions, the members of the Academy being almost twice as many as those of the Society." 80

The disparity, indeed, between the treatment that outsiders, in general, received and the security enjoyed by an Academician, was frequently debated: the Art Journal reported in 1858:

> "... the 'outsiders' are dissatisfied that works approaching in number 1800, have been rejected... it is a venerable tradition: the slaughter of the innocents is now a recognised institution;... the complaint, we say, is inveterate: shall we not, therefore, repeat it year by year, until that which is wont to be regarded as the citadel of Art shall be set in order? There are hung pictures of very inferior merit, to the exclusion of works of rare excellence; and there are pictures of superior character placed out of sight, while others of positive inferiority are paraded in excellent places." 81

While Jopling recalled what a rat-race it all was:

> "I was busy... on a picture of two girls, which I called 'Consolation'. When it was finished, I bravely sent it up to the forthcoming RA Exhibition. It was neither accepted nor rejected. It was in the 'Doubtful' class. For the benefit of the uninitiated, I will explain that when the Council is sitting in judgment on the pictures sent in by outsiders, a few are accepted, and are bound to be hung, and they have the magic letter 'A' chalked by one of the assistants on the back of the canvas; others are summarily rejected, and have an ugly cross marked on them. The rest - more than could possibly be hung - are marked with a 'D', and are utilized to fill any vacant space. In these 'Doubtful' pictures,Luck is a dominant factor. Sometimes, an inch too much in the size of a frame, preventing a vacant space being found for it, will ruin the artist's chance for that year. My picture was eventually not hung..." 82

Thus there were not infrequently, too, complaints by artists that their work had neither been rejected nor hung. Thus, too, the suspense and uncertainty surrounding exhibition at the Academy for outsiders.

Women were outsiders, by definition, in some quarters of opinion, even after 1861, though works were selected for exhibition anonymously, therefore sexlessly, so that the discrimination which excluded women from the RA Schools and from membership of the Academy did not, in theory, prevent their work from appearing in the exhibitions of that august body. There are no records which would permit one to know what works were submitted in any year but not accepted, so it is only from passing remarks in memoirs or autobiographies that one can know to what degree submission meant exhibition for any artist. Ward, Jopling, and Thompson, in their autobiographies, allow the reader to build up a fair picture (indicative of acceptance usually following submission), but such documentation exists for very few of the artists who are of interest here.

Membership was for life, so the surprises and freshness of an Academy show came often rather from the outsiders' work than from that of the members, who could easily become repetitious and tediously predictable to observers, before their membership (and they) expired. Critical accounts of the Academy, however, habitually prioritised the members' work, so that if an outsider had a piece hung, but in an unfortunate position, it might well receive absolutely no attention at all, being noticed by no visitors and remarked by no reviewer. Such was the superior position that the Academy took, that no member was allowed to be simultaneously a member of another artistic body; and such was the superior position that the Academy had, that artists often resigned their membership of other societies in anticipation of entry into the hallowed ranks of the Academy. There were supposed to be forty Academicians, twenty Associates, two engraver members and four engraver Associates, a total which, as has been mentioned in chapter 2, later in this period was increased. The exclusivity of such an arrangement as this was seen to extend to the mechanics of exhibition; Laidlay again:

> "... there are not wanting men (sic) who frankly admit that it is only when So-and-so is hanging that they are well-placed, or likely to have many pictures in the show. Thus, outsiders who are intimate with many Academicians are nearly always represented; those who know a few Academicians have their ups and downs; but there is little variation in the luck of the outsider who has no angel, when the waters of Burlington House are troubled, to help him into the pool. Under such circumstances as these, it is easy to understand what a struggle a poor and unbefriended artist must have." 83

Needless to say, when progress depended on social mobility, women were at an overwhelming disadvantage. Anonymity in selection did not, then, mean, for them, democracy but invisibility. Throughout the mid-century period, the number of female exhibitors at the Academy oscillated between 48 and 108 (see table), the low years being 1860, 1861, 1862 and the peak being reached in the year

before the SFA started, 1856. 1869 was an exceptional year, in that a supplementary exhibition was held, of works which had been selected for showing but not hung, giving two totals for that year, 56 female artists being in the exhibition proper, and an additional 67 in the supplementary show. It is, sadly, unsurprising that more women appear in the latter total than in the former.

It is curious that it was in the years when women were scarcest at the Academy that reviews of the RA show paid them particular notice: in 1860, the Saturday Review started off its last (fourth) notice of the exhibition with a long and favourable paragraph which considered the works of Ward, (fig.64), Solomon, (fig.65), Boyce/Wells, (fig.66), Margaret Robbinson, Osborn and Fox (called Bridell); [84] in 1861, the Illustrated London News ran an article entitled "The Close of the Exhibitions" which gave a positive paragraph to the works by Osborn, (fig.12), Solomon, Boyce/Wells, (fig.14), Benham Hay and Emily Macirone; [85] in that same year the Spectator started off its fourth notice of the exhibition with:

> "The lady painters occupy a very different rank in British Art now to that which they enjoyed in the days of Angelika Kauffman. Forsaking simpering mediocrity, they devote themselves to downright study with a success commensurate to their zeal,"

and praised Boyce/Wells, Benham Hay, Osborn, Solomon, Fox (called Bridell), both Mutries, and Emily Hunt [86]; in 1862, the Times, the Critic ("the remarkable position assumed by the ladies who have made art their study and profession..."), [87] and the Spectator gave prominence in their notices to the women present. [88]

Of those women who did have work in the Academy shows, many were hung regularly or for some years running: that is to say, the occasional female exhibitor was comparatively rare. A typical case is that of the miniaturist Margaret Tekusch, who was shown

at the RA nearly constantly between 1845 and 1888; or that of Anna Charretie, painter of domestic genre and fancy pictures, who was included with similar regularity from 1842 to 1875. In frequent cases, a woman would exhibit religiously at the Academy every year except those in which she gave birth, or went abroad with husband and family, such was an artist's fidelity to the Academy if it favoured them. One such was Sophie Anderson, painter of child-genre and fancy pictures, who showed between children in the late fifties, was absent abroad in the sixties, then showed virtually every year from 1871 to 1888.

Another pattern among women who were regular Academy exhibitors, was the tendency to place important and new work there, and back up that Academy showing with studies, preparatory work or old pieces at other exhibitions. (This is in line, of course, with the Academy's acknowledged predominance.) An example of this practice is to be found in Ward, who - taking examples which particularly relate the Academy to the SFA - showed "The tower, ay, the Tower" at the RA in 1864, while showing nothing at the SFA, but sending "The Tower" there in 1872; who showed "The first step" (fig.64) at the RA in 1860, while showing "Sunny Hours" and the original sketch of "Howard's Farewell" (which had been an RA exhibit in 1858) at the SFA, sending "The first step" to that show only in 1871. That a work might even derive its interest from being an Academy exhibit is suggested in some journalistic writing which previews work in hand as a forthcoming RA picture, not simply as the current work of such-and-such an artist.[89] The same hold over artistic production and exhibition is reflected in the relation women's sending to the provinces had to their Academy exhibits. A work which was new one year at the Academy might often find its way the next year to Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, or wherever. Osborn could be cited here, as a keen and consistent Academy exhibitor who, for instance, showed "The Escape of Lord Nithsdale" (fig.12) there in 1861, sending it the next year to Birmingham, and the following year to Liverpool; similarly, her "Christmas Time" (fig.67) appeared at

the Academy in 1865, and was trundled out again in two years' time for the show in Glasgow.

This was not unusual practice for artists, but for women it was seen as questionable, because, as has been conveyed above, their place was seen, by the majority of critics, to be in the Female Artists' shows, even if that were in addition to, rather than instead of, their Academy showings. The Art Journal critic addressed himself to this matter at the outset of the SFA:

> "On behalf of this young institution we would appeal to those ladies whose works have already been made known to the public, and received its favourable verdict through the medium of other societies. We do not ask them to forego the advantages attending an appearance in the Royal Academy and elsewhere, but we do ask them to reserve a portion of their strength to further the object of their sisters in art." 90

What is being acknowledged here, although not in so many words, is the tendency for the Academy shows to bleed other shows white. A name that suggests itself here is that of Solomon, who exhibited constantly at the Academy from 1852 to 1875, while showing only once at the SFA, three times at the British Institution, and twice at Suffolk Street (Society of British Artists). Again, Osborn had 43 works shown at the Academy, over the years, but only 4 at the British Institution, 11 at Suffolk Street, and none at the SFA. Or Martha Mutrie, who showed nothing at the SFA, once at the British Institution, and five times at the Winter Exhibition, but over and over again at the Academy from 1853 to 1878. Whether sales were better for women at the Academy is impossible to tell from evidence, but the prestige was certainly greater and the attention probably worth more. It will be recalled from Chapter 2, that these women were often cited as support for the argument that women should be admitted to membership of the Academy.

The obstinancy of the Academy on the question of women, and its self-image as a gentlemen's club (an inheritance from Reynolds' day), continued to vex and frustrate women artists' efforts

throughout this period, but did not, it seems, greatly diminish the covetability of a place within it, whether as a member or simply as an exhibitor. This meant that the Academy was, at the same time, the field in which women most wanted to succeed and the principal barrier to their achieving success, until the late 1870's had seen the establishment of the Grosvenor as the harbinger of a new age.

The British Institution was set on foot in 1805, its professed aim to:

> "encourage the talents of the Artists of the United Kingdom; so as to improve and extend our manufactures, by that degree of taste and elegance of design which are to be exclusively derived from the cultivation of the Fine Arts."

Further, to do this by a particular means: "to open an Exhibition for the sale of their productions." [91] It was headed by Governors (derived by subscription), from whom a Committee was formed to run the organisation; there was no membership scheme. All the officers, at the time of the Institution's formation, were male, but there was a note in the rules to the effect that "Ladies, who shall be governors, may vote by proxy." This recognition that, though the polite conventions were to be observed, women might have some role in the Institution's survival, is vindicated later in its life by the emergence, in the '50's, of such persons in the lists of its various supporters. These could be a Governor (50gns. subscription), a Hereditary Governor (100 gns. subscription), Annual Subscriber (5 gns. annually), Life Subscriber (3 gns. annually); the only category of supporter who needed no financial qualification was that of Honorary Member (elected by the Committee (Directors) and that of Exhibitor. The liklihood of women participating in the last guise was the highest, of course, but some wealthy females, including Angela Burdett-Coutts, Mrs. Egerton Leigh and Mrs. James Harrison, served as Hereditary Governors in the '50's and '60's; while the roll of Life Governors

included, throughout the same two decades, the names of Miss Atherton and Miss Middleton; and several female names appeared among the Subscribers, too.

As for their part as Exhibitors, however: in the first Exhibition, in 1806, the only female names out of a total of 82, were Miss Andrus 'modeller in wax', Olivia Serres, and the Misses Spilsbury (Maria and E. Ashe). [92] (There male colleagues included such as George Stubbs, J.M.W. Turner, Benjamin West, James Ward, and Paul Sandby.) Pictures were selected for inclusion in the show by a group of seven chosen from among the Directors (Committee). The rules, at the time of the mid-century, advised intending contributors that "No Picture or other Work of Art, will be received which has already been publicly exhibited", and that "Portraits, Drawings in Watercolours, and Architectural Drawings, are inadmissible"; which regulations, though devised to encourage a standard of 'high' art, effectively kept large numbers of women artists at bay, since, as was recognised, they very often exercised their skills solely in watercolours, and their subjects were frequently only or mostly within the genre of portraiture. It is not surprising, on this ground, to find the numbers of women exhibiting with the BI rather low; but it <u>is</u> surprising that their number is low when one reflects that the consequence of an exclusion of portraits meant a predominance of landscape, and that was another genre in which women habitually also worked a lot. However, the numbers <u>were</u> low, ranging from a lowpoint of 17 (out of 500) in 1850 to a highpoint of 36 (out of 399) in 1866; an observation made on the 1858 BI exhibition - an observation typical, in its tone of discontent and complaint, of many BI reviews - is relevant here; the source is the <u>Art Journal</u>:

> "The British Institution was established 'for the Promotion of Art': it is, above all other 'helps and outlets' to Art, that from which the younger artist expects, and reasonably expects, to derive immediate advantage. Here his (93) advanced competitors are few; here examination comes easy, inasmuch as he is not lost in a crowd; and to this exhibition collectors resort

> in order to extend 'patronage' to neophytes in the profession... Here, then, especially, care should be taken that contributors may consider justice assured; yet here notoriously, year after year, we find evidence of the grossest 'favouritism' while 'bad places', or rejection altogether, may be foretold with as much certainty as that the day of opening will be early in February... The natural consequence is, that let an artist who deserves honour, but has not yet attained it, send in a work, the chances are against its being accepted at all." 94

Such circumstances would daunt the female exhibitor, who felt that already she had difficulties to overcome which her male colleague did not, and the experience of Howitt four years previously, could be one of many similar: the Athenaeum reported in March that year:

> "A story is going about, curiously illustrative of the taste and judgment displayed by the mysterious and irresponsible power which sits enthroned in Pall Mall, dispensing its ignorance in matters artistic very much at its ease. On several occasions lately we have been compelled in the interests of Art to use sharp words against the British Institution, - but nothing which we have said in the way of condemnation can have carried home the sting of censure like the fact we have now to state. It is positively said that the gem of the Portland Gallery, Miss Howitt's "Margaret returning from the Fountain", the finest picture so far of the year, and one of the best pictures - both as to the conceiving imagination and the executing hand - ever painted by a woman, was rejected as unworthy of a place on the walls of the British Institution!" 95

The BI exhibitions, indeed, commanded more complaint than praise throughout the '50's and '60's, from critics and artists alike, its reputation declining inexorably; thus, for instance, the Spectator in 1852:

> "As we paced through the rooms of the British Institution on the private view day - glancing along that dreary length of what, with some few oasis-points, may, to all intellectual purpose, be termed blank canvas - our mind was

> made up to the conclusion that this year's exhibition is, beyond all its recollected predecessors, supreme in rampant mediocrity." 96

Almost a decade later, an artist made the same lament, in the columns of the Art Journal:

> "For many years past the exhibition of pictures at the British Gallery in Pall Mall has been of such a character that the artists have looked upon it with regret, not unmixed with contempt, and the public with indifference or reproof. Foreigners have left the rooms with a lower opinion of English painting; and what might be a credit to us, and a source of advancement to Art and artists, is neither one nor the other." 97

To do the Institution justice, it had always laid as much emphasis on its summer exhibitions of works by deceased artists and on the educational facilities it offered from study of these (old and new) master-works, as on its so-called winter exhibitions of living artists' works. [98] Also, its own confidence was flawed by its awareness of its subservient relationship to the Royal Academy, which had started with its inception; its mismanagement of this particular circumstance can be illustrated by the following letter from an artist, printed in the Athenaeum in 1850; it was signed "An Exhibitor":

> "May I ask how it happens that the 'private view' of this Gallery is always open to the Royal Academicians, who ought to have nothing to do with it, and closed to the exhibitors themselves, who are told to expect everything from it? If I mistake not, this Institution was founded to supply the deficiencies of the Royal Academy! If so, to be consistent, why not exclude all artists but those who support the Exhibition, and who are interested in being present on such occasions; instead of inviting an exclusive body (who have a private view of their own elsewhere) to meet governors and patrons of Art to discuss the merits and defects of those who can scarcely be said to command any other arena for the display and

> sale of their works than this little mysteriously-conducted establishment? Under this unfair arrangement, the exhibitors are virtually shut out from all chance of extending their professional connexion by meeting the purchasers of pictures." 99

Given the unsatisfactory reputation, then, of the BI shows in the period, it would be understandable if for many women it was not an attractive arena to try and enter, unless one could hope to shine brighter here, among feeble lamps, than at the RA, but some women did choose it, and not because they could find entry nowhere else. Mary Thornycroft showed at the BI between 1840 and 1864, although she was being accepted at the Academy in the same period; Carpenter, in her long career, showed 50 works at the BI, in the same period when she was being hung at the RA (although her RA total was three times that of her BI exhibits); Mrs. Mary Harrison showed at the BI between 1845 and 1861, when she was also being received at the Academy, Suffolk Street, the New Society of Painters in Watercolour, and the SFA; Eloise Stannard found equal favour at the BI as at the Academy (30 works at the Academy, 29 works at the Institution) between 1856 and 1893; while other lesser artists, such as Eliza Goodall and Louisa Rimer, seem to have played roundabouts and swings with the Institution and the Academy. The names here suggest some specific points that refer to the Institution's policy of excluding watercolour and portraiture: the works Carpenter sent here, though she was known as a portraitist, were fancy pictures, more often than not infantine [100]; Harrison's oils of flowers came to the BI, but her watercolour bouquets and posies appeared at the New. Other exhibiting patterns of women who used the Institution include that of McIan, who after showing at the BI from 1838/45 deserted it for the new Free Exhibition (later the National Institution) - a pattern that was followed by Mrs. Criddle, who left the BI (and the Academy) for the Old Watercolour Society at the end of the 1840's - and that of Elizabeth Murray, who exhibited everywhere but the BI in her long career (this because she worked solely in watercolour). Thus, the Institution, in different ways, gathered to itself the worst of artists' work and not necessarily

the best of artists.

In 1867, the Institution's life was terminated by the circumstances of the lease on its premises expiring. Throughout that year, the art press discussed the success or failure of the body, over the years, the Art Journal venturing in the August:

> "The directors may have become dissatisfied with the declining popularity of the gallery, but we are perfectly certain that its ancient prestige could be restored under a system of management suited to the progress of the times. The final close of the British Institution will be a source of infinite regret." [101]

Though by the November, it concluded: "The character of the winter exhibitions had of late years so much deteriorated, that, in the final closing of the Institution, there is little left to regret save the annual summer collection of old pictures." [102] It was suggested by the writer that the setting up of a life school might have prolonged the Institution's usefulness. Had this occurred, it would have made a difference to women's situation fascinating to contemplate (always assuming that women had access to it). As it was, the British Institution did contribute to women's art education through its collection of old masters, [103] and provided an exhibition space that offered a less stringent (but therefore less prestigious) place for the artist who wanted to work and succeed on conventional terms. The Institution was not a gallery to which the 'modern' woman would send - Howitt, and McIan preferred the Free, Bodichon supported the SFA, - and neither was it the gallery with which the academically ambitious woman bothered - Ward, Blunden, Boyce/Wells, Robbinson, Solomon, etc. persisted rather at the Academy; but it was evidently valuable to women at large, simply because it provided another exhibition-room for them to try. [104]

Despite the traditional linking of women with watercolour painting, and its related connections with amateurism, its

secondary status, and its typically modest physical attributes, a French reviewer of the Old Watercolour Society's 1855 exhibition could comment: "L'acquarelle est, pour les Anglais, un art national... Ce genre de peinture, que nous abandonnons volontiers aux pensionnats de demoiselles, est cultivé en Angleterre par les artistes de premier ordre." [105] This impression (surely, in fact, erroneous, in spite of Turner) was what the Old Watercolour Society, established in 1804, had worked towards: this meant that it had striven to eschew anything and anybody that suggested the amateur or the secondary - women, in the Society's view, seem to have come into both those categories, to judge from the discrimination they received from this exhibiting body. Perhaps prophetically - since it was to be the watercolour societies which so antagonised women artists that their treatment by exhibiting bodies became an issue -,the Society discriminated against women from the start, when it was set up by ten men for "the revelation it made of the strength acquired by an imperfectly recognised school of painting, as well as... the opportunity then given to amateurs and collectors of choosing and acquiring examples of the rising art." [106] The following extracts from the rules tell their own story:

> "1. The Society... shall consist of 24 Members. There shall also be an additional number (not exceeding six) of Ladies, and twelve Associate Exhibitors. They shall all be of good moral character, and resident in the United Kingdom...
>
> "27. Ladies, Members of the Society, may send their Pictures, not exceeding eight in number, for exhibition. They shall be admitted according to the regulations expressed in clause 28 ('Any Person desirous of becoming an Associate Exhibitor, shall be proposed by a Member, and admitted by ballot; two-thirds of the votes, including proxies, shall be the majority necessary for the election of the Candidate.'), and shall be liable to the provisions expressed in clause 52 ('Every Member shall send annually one finished picture at least, for Exhibition.') They shall not be called upon to take any share in the management of the Society's affairs, and they shall be exempt from all contributions towards the expenses of the Society."

Roget interpreted this legislation in the following way, when discussing Anne Bryne, the only woman in the Society during its first five years: "The special provisions applicable to her class, which are in modern times less rigidly insisted on, were not wanting in chivalrous generosity", and he quoted the following commentary from 1808:

> "Ladies associate-exhibitors, as they can never share actively in the management of the Society's affairs, are not eligible as Members; but from the moment of their election they become entitled to partake of the profits of the exhibition in the same proportion as the members, while they are exempt from the trouble of official duties, and from every responsibility whatever on account of any losses incurred by the Society." 107

Although the writer quoted by Roget seemed to have been patting the men of the OWS on the back for their generosity, these regulations rather protected the Society than the women to whom it claimed to be condescending, since very few women had money of their own that would enable them to assist in making up any losses the Society might make; thus, these rules simply make sure that those who commanded the resources to be responsible for losses, were responsible for the same. The logic on which the ruling is based has a circularity which is nigh impossible to penetrate - the ladies may not be Members because they may not be Members, seems to be the message; this was to irritate the strong-minded women of the '50's beyond bearing.

The first exhibition took place in 1805, consisting of 275 works by 16 artists [108]; thus, the shows provided a place where an artist could display a representative selection of work, not being restricted to being judged on one or two pieces. No previously exhibited work was admitted, even when it had been shown only out of London. For a short period (1813/20) oils were admitted, but their "extended scope had not rendered them more successful in attracting public support than were those which had

been confined to watercolours" [109] so the autonomy of water-colour was reasserted. In 1823, the step was taken of excluding amateurs, militating - however incidentally - against women with considerable effect. At the time this ruling was made, there were four women in the Society (Barrett, Byrne, Fielding, Scott) [110] and, although the number of women in the Society fluctuated over the years, there were still only four female participants at the middle of the century. They were now called Honorary Members, and were Maria Harrison, Mrs. Criddle, Eliza Sharpe, and Nancy Rayner, who had been showing with the Society as Associates - the previous appellation for women - since 1847, 1849, 1829, and, for Rayner, that very year of 1850, respectively. (Women who had been associated with the Society in the intervening years were Harriet Gouldsmith, a member since 1812; Eliza Sharpe's sister, Louisa, who had been elected in 1829). Comparatively, at this stage (1850) there were 26 Members and 17 Associates (all, of course, male). Only these people exhibited with the Society: that is to say, no outsiders were admitted as exhibitors. The move to re-categorise the women, terming them Honorary Members, and further distinguishing them from legitimate Members of the OWS, provoked the following letter, signed 'ONE FOR THE LADIES', and appearing in the Art Journal in June 1850:

> "Sir, - Let me call your attention to a subject alluded to in the Athenaeum of today... the Annual Committee of Arrangement at the Old Watercolour Society have thought fit, for the first time, to put the ladies down in the catalogue as honorary members, which they are not. It is not necessary now to prove that the committee possessed no power to do this, nor to throw any light upon their object in doing it; it is enough to assert, that no such term as honorary member occurs throughout the laws and regulations of the Society. As you know, this is a title implying that the possessor of it is but an amateur, and no professed artist - the public so understand it, and would estimate accordingly the works of the said most unjustly and heedlessly, so called honorary members. In short, the interests of the ladies have been placed, for a time, in great and serious jeopardy; virtually, their names have been struck out of the list of members, without cause assigned..." [111]

The Athenaeum piece referred to by the writer was probably its review of the OWS show, wherein the critic said:

> "There is a new addition to the list of what we perceive the Society now denominate 'honorary' members, - meaning thereby lady members. This title is calculated to mislead the public into the idea that these are amateurs. The young aspirant in question is Miss Nancy Rayner, - and she gives great promise." 112

The oldest Rayner sister was, of course, in no degree an amateur. The following year, the catalogue showed that the female members had been reverted to 'Ladies', and in 1860 they became subsumed into the 'Associate Exhibitor' category. By 1891, Roget was able to refer to "the 'Associateship' of the Society of Painters in Watercolours, which had long since been adopted as the equivalent title to 'Lady-membership'." 113

The inclusion of women did not increase, however, and in 1870 the total was still only four; the names this time being Criddle, Sharpe and Harrison still, with the addition of Gillies. 114 These artists, faithful within the limitations placed on them by the Society itself, tended to show steadily: Sharpe exhibited one or two drawings for most of the 42 years of her OWS career, notching up an average showing of two works per year; Harrison showed a total of 439 works at the Society over a period of years, Roget describing her contributions as "constant". 115 Similarly, Criddle was described by Roget as "a constant contributor to all the Society's exhibitions for more than thirty years." 116

Such devotion to the OWS on these women's parts was not, however, exclusive; they frequently worked in oil as well as watercolour, and therefore necessarily showed in other galleries too. Of Criddle, for instance, the Art Journal noted in 1849 that she was that person "whose pictures in oil occasionally exhibited at the British Institution have attracted notice"; 117 while Rayner and Gillies were known at the Academy, BI and Suffolk Street, as well as the OWS.

Because of the Society's sex discrimination, women were of very small importance in its exhibitions during most of the mid-century period, but the fortunes of female painters improved at the OWS in the latter '70's, with some of the strongest of the younger generation of watercolourists being called in, in the persons of Clara Montalba (1874), Helen Allingham (1875), and Helen Coleman (Angell) (1879). The advent of the foremost was seen as a very positive move:

> "... of the two new Associates, there is no difficulty in appraising the wisdom of the society in the case of Miss Montalba. Her two interiors from Venice exhibit an unusual power in the brilliant use of colour, and in skilful contrasts of light and shade..."
>
> "With this characteristic of weakliness so present in the work of many young Associates of the Society, it is refreshing to come, in Miss Montalba's drawings, upon a woman's performances, which impress us with a sense of strength both in their selection of subject and in their use of colour." 118

In general, admission of women into the Society's ranks seems to have been very much a contingent affair, the women's suitability deriving from their relation to another Member, whose place, more often than not, the incoming woman filled. For instance, Maria Harrison was accepted on the death of her brother George; Maud Naftel (elected in 1887) was daughter of the Member P.J. Naftel; Miss M. Scott (later Brookbank), who had been elected in 1823, was the daughter of the Associate William; Nancy Rayner's father Samuel had been an Associate since 1845. Over and above this evidence of the family's importance in a woman artist's career, it is interes'ing - but presumably quite coincidental - how many of the women of the OWS were members of a painting family: the two Sharpes were half of a group of four sisters who practised art [119]; Harrison was the daughter of Mrs. Mary Harrison, the flower painter, with painting siblings [120]; Rayner's sisters have already been mentioned here; and Montalba had three sisters who were also artists (Ellen, Henrietta, Hilda). [121]

It is ironic - or perhaps self-explanatory, given the jealousy of which male artists were accused during this period of the rising woman artist - that in the very field which traditionally was supposed to be womanly, even feminine, female painters figured so slightly. The Old Watercolour Society, in fact, seems to have adopted much the same stance towards women as the RA, whom it tried to parallel in its own medium. Its Winter Exhibitions betrayed the same bias, stemming as they did from the same body. The OWS's stance on women can be seen as one of the chief reasons why the Dudley, or General Exhibition, of watercolours, beginning in 1865, was so welcomed - it was often noticed as giving a good place to women, who in their turn were often noticed as doing good work. By that time, largely due to the OWS and New Society, watercolour was a medium which was accepted as having a life of its own, but the Old's ambition for that position defined for it a discriminatory stance in defence against the traditional character and reputation of the medium as feminine. This meant, to its own glory rather than that of its members, that the women of the OWS were, relative to other artists of their gender, more distinguished than the men, and formed quite a consistently strong part of the Society's exhibitions over the years.

The New Watercolour Society - later to become the Institute of Painters in Watercolour - despite initial differences from its predecessors, unfortunately for women had in common with it its disdain of female artists. The New Society was set up in 1832, distinct from the Society of Painters in Watercolours (which became known therefore as the Old), and started as a free exhibition showing in Bond Street. Roget, documenting the history of its parent society, gave an account also of the establishment of the offspring:

> "The 'New Society', as it was called, held its first experimental exhibition... in 1832. There were 120 exhibitors and 330 drawings; and the show was so far successful that visitors and sales were alike numerous. The next year it took the name of 'The Associated Painters in Water-Colours'... The number of

> exhibitors in 1833 increased to 170. But the first succeeding years of the association's life were anything but peaceful. Serious dissension arose among the members, and a struggle for power ensued, which ended in the resignation of half a dozen of the promoters. Then came financial troubles and a lawsuit, and in 1834 a reconstruction. Three annual exhibitions had been tried on the 'free' plan. They were partly supported by amateurs, and were managed by a committee elected for the purpose. But the twenty-five artists, most of them among the original promoters, who now restarted the association under the first title, the 'New Society of Painters in Water-Colours', found it expedient to abandon the liberal programme of a general admission, and adopt a plan of selection and membership similar to that already tried and found successful by the leading body, of which it remained for many years a close imitation." 122

The name was changed yet again after the Royal Commission of 1863 (which, though nominally set up to look into the state of the Royal Academy, caused all art societies to reassess their positions), to the Institute of Painters in Watercolours.

The record of the New, on female representation, like its parent's, is not glowing. The finite nature of the exhibition opportunities offered by it - it had a members-only policy, like the elder society - was a considerable factor in the slight appearance women numerically made in the exhibitions (see table). Of a membership of 57 artists in 1850, only nine were women; these were Fanny Corbaux and Louisa Corbaux, Jane Egerton, Fanny Harris, Mary Margetts, Mrs. William (Emma) Oliver, Sarah Setchell, and Fanny Steers [123]. The number only rose on the election of an additional member, in 1854, to 10 (Emily Farmer was the new recruit) and in 1861 to 12, on the election of Mrs. William (Mary) Duffield and Elizabeth Murray; while there was a similar accession in the '70's as there was in the Old, with the advent of Thompson/Butler (1874), Coleman (Angell) (1875), Marion Chase (1879) and Mary Gow (1875). Comparative numbers of men in the Society ranged between 30 and 50 (Members) and between 17 and 24 (Associates) in the period under

discussion. Women were listed distinct from the men in the catalogues from 1856 (1859 in the case of the Winter Exhibition) as 'Ladies' or 'Lady members', in contrast to 'Members' and 'Associates'; this, together with the comparable move on the part of the OWS, makes it surprising that some parts of the press welcomed the SFA in 1857 with such words as: "... we were surprised to hear that a new Exhibition had been started in consequence of the unjust exclusion of ladies from our Water-colour Societies." [124]

There was another small way in which women infiltrated the male ranks of the New, however, and this was in the guise of Honorary Members, among whom Bonheur (1866) and Browne (1868) found themselves; though no British women were included in the lists (which also contained Millais, Maclise, Madou and Fred. Goodall).

Though women's work was slight in number at the New's exhibitions, it was often seen as the most interesting, in the cases of Steers and Farmer. Thus, of the former: "The best bits of landscape in the Gallery are two little sunny English views by Miss Fanny Steers, thoroughly charming and artist-like"; "At the junior Society no landscape pleased us so thoroughly as the 'Lockhampton Church, Sunset' of Miss Fanny Steers..."; "We fix unhesitatingly upon Miss Fanny Steers as the author of the two best things in the Gallery: 'An Autumn Evening' and 'A Woodland Scene'..."; "Every picture she contributes is a gem, and we noticed that hers were among the first to be sold at the private view." [125] While, of the latter:

> "... Miss Farmer's pictures, which are, all things considered, the best figure pieces in the collection. They are true in gesture and expression, conscientious in execution and harmonious in colour";
>
> "Miss Farmer is the only figure artist (here) whose drawings give any hope or promise..."
>
> "Let us call attention to two modest bits of Domestic by Miss Farmer, the best of that class in the room..." [126]

And, indeed, the Critic's reviewer observed in 1862 that "The lady artists take a very high position in the New Watercolour Society." [129] The women who showed with the New were of various character; as is obvious here, Steers was a landscapist and Farmer a painter of Domestic Genre; Margetts painted birds, animals and still life, while Harrison and Harris were fruit and flower painters, and Duffield produced landscape, along with Oliver; Murray and Fanny Corbaux tended more to the figure, while Egerton specialised in fancy portraits. There was, seemingly, no prescribed number of works that should or might be exhibited by each artist, and Harrison, Margetts and Oliver would sometimes show ten or eleven works in one exhibition. By contrast, Fanny Corbaux showed only five works in the whole of the period, and Sarah Setchell only three. There was thus no typical female performance at the New and, indeed, it looks as if the selectors might well have deliberately accepted a diverse range of women. They all showed in other societies as well, even in those cases of prolificness noted above.

It took the New (or Institute) a long time before it stood out from under the shadow of the elder watercolour society, but it eventually achieved the character of a somewhat more progressive counterpart to its staid parent, though it lost some of its best exhibitors to the Dudley, after 1865 (among them Coleman, whose work everywhere attracted notice [128].) As with the OWS, too, the Institute suffered, as far as its women were concerned, from the Dudley's greater liberalism. Although the Athenaeum could say of the New in 1852, "There is no exhibition-room in which female talent and genius figure to such good effect as in this" [129], it was only of the Dudley (as far as watercolour was concerned, that is) that the Times could say in 1872:

> "... it is sure always to command a wide field of supply. It is open to amateurs as well as professional painters, foreigners as well as natives, provincial as well as metropolitan artists; there is no exclusion of sex - indeed ladies are unusually prominent in it." 130 (which comment, by implication, suggests the defects of the New.)

Despite the watercolour societies, most of the London exhibitions did not professedly favour any one medium over another, although in practice, such an open policy meant the predominance of oil painting. The Society of British Artists was the gallery in which oils and watercolour seem to have mingled perhaps the most democratically. Formed in 1823, the Society of British Artists' original purpose was to extend and improve exhibiting opportunities for artists in London. It "was not to rival the existing societies since every member was to 'be at at liberty to assist and support any other Society'" [131], and every opportunity seems to have been taken by the Society to stress its wish to be seen as not unfriendly to other exhibiting bodies: Sir John Soane, a patron from the start, said in a note intended for the first Society dinner:

> "I am fully persuaded that the Members of the Society are anxious to combine their interests with those of the Royal Academy. The greater the number of enlightened Societies in town and country, so much the better for the interests of the Fine Arts: they will all form one family, and I trust their rallying point will always be the Royal Academy." 132

In 1831, the Secretary, in like manner, took pains to point out in the catalogue that the Society had "never opposed, either directly or indirectly, any existing institution for the promotion of the Fine Arts." [133]

The Society was supported by a subscriber system, and drew its members, as did the Academy, from elections; non-members could exhibit along with members. To give up membership, however, cost £100! [134] Women were admitted as honorary members, and allowed to exhibit free of charge (that is to say, without having to pay a commission to the Society). The number of women connected with the SBA (often referred to by the name of its gallery's location, Suffolk Street) increased steadily over the years, from a situation whereby no women at all appeared in the exhibitors' book, to the 1850 show including 46 women, the 1857 exhibition featuring 62,

and the 1869 show boasting 98 female contributors. No Members, however, in this period, were women, though by 1858 the Membership had risen to number 28. In this year, it was observed that being a non-member had distinct disadvantages over Membership: "Of the hanging, it must be said that we have never seen 'outsiders' less considerately treated." [135] (There had, in the early days, been a Society rule that every Member might have a work hung on the line, which would, obviously, have severely disadvantaged non-Member contributions).

The Suffolk Street shows suffered from critical abuse quite as strong as that endured by the BI, though not perhaps so prolonged; during the '50's and '60's, however, the following was not untypical, especially if the source in question was the Athenaeum, Spectator, or Times:

> "We thought the British Institution poor enough this year, but it was beaten by the National, and now the British Artists come to dispute the prize - not without solid claims" (Spectator, 1853)

> "Every man at his worst is the character of the Exhibition of the Suffolk Street Society which opened to private view on Saturday last. There is a peculiarly sodden and exhausted air about it - a flavour as of re-boiled tea-leaves. We have seen the same thing 50 times before, and not only the same, but less bad of its kind" (Spectator, 1858) [136]

> "Nought can be more painful to the critic, few things more tedious to the reader, than the task which befalls us annually of chronicling the trivial variations of merit and demerit that, as the years go by, present themselves on the melancholy level of this Society's Exhibitions... This astonishing dulness is rarely redeemed by refinement, or made pathetic by the sense of weakness, which would, but cannot, strive. It would be vulgar in a greater degree than is yet the case if the paintings had more life in them... (Anything) is more acceptable than the heartless, hopeless, incomprehensible lack of feeling, the

> immobility and clay-like stolidity, which present themselves in the doleful mass which comprises, say, a thousand of the eleven hundred and odd works we look at here..." (Athenaeum, 1866) 137.

This does not say much for any of the artists who exhibited at Suffolk Street, but the women do not seem to have been outstandingly bad among the other contributors. In fact, in some shows a reviewer will specifically commend the female exhibitors (who seem, from the following passage, to have been hung in segregation):

> "A high average of merit is maintained in the room containing the works of female artists by such pictures of well-known excellence as Rosa Bonheur's great cattle-ploughing subject, 'Labourages - Nivernais' (fig.67), and portraits by Henriette Browne; Mrs. E.M. Ward's 'Children in the Tower'; Mrs. Benham Hay's illustrations of scenes in the narrative of Tobit and the parable of the Prodigal Son; and Miss Osborn's 'Christmas' (fig.68) " 138 (SBA Winter Exhibition, 1865).

The way in which the Athenaeum characterised the average Suffolk Street display or work, however, was similar to the terms that the same critic used in summing up the women's work at the SFA that same year (see above), though he mentions no names:

> "The Suffolk Street Exhibition is filled with smeary green landscapes, goggling portraits, all grin and attitude, - clever skids and skirts of paint that seem come together by chance, - studies of human-looking sheep and sheepish-looking humanity, - tumble-down barns that, like Stilton cheeses to epicures, are beautiful only in their decay, - and the usual number of Gil Blas, Petruchios, and Don Juans:- as certain to be found in Exhibitions as that well known lot at a country sale, no.365. A shower Bath and Garden Roller." 139

The women who exhibited at the SBA were as various as that, but not, surely, as dire, since their number included 4 Nasmyths - Barbara, Charlotte, Jane, and Margaret -, Anne (Mrs. Valentine)

Bartholomew, Corbaux, and Augusta Withers, often praised for her birds (fig.69). [140] Loyal exhibitors over a number of years included Anna Blunden, Emma Walter and Emma Brownlow; while women as successful as Ward, Benham Hay, Bonheur, and Anderson, MEE, Mrs. Duffield and Oliver, were not above sending a work or two to Suffolk Street every now and then. The gallery had more respect than the BI, and less daunting male rivals than the Academy.

These women and the others at Suffolk Street tended not to show there exclusively, however; though Withers, while showing equally at the SFA, had only 8 works at the Academy and 6 at the New Society of Painters in Watercolour over a more than forty year period of exhibiting. In this way, Suffolk Street was just one card in the exhibiting pack, so to speak: for example, Emma Brownlow's pictures of domestic and Continental genre had Suffolk Street as one port of call on quite long exhibiting journeys: "The crisis past; a ray of hope" (1861?) was at Suffolk Street in 1863, and Liverpool that same year, and at the SFA in 1865; "Lullaby" appeared at the BI in 1865, at Suffolk Street the year after, at the Winter Exhibition in 1866, and, extraordinarily, at the Academy the next year. As with the British Institution exhibitors, it seems not to have been the case that women resorted to the SBA because they were not accepted anywhere else: Margaret Robbinson showed at the Academy to reasonable notices, while she also showed at Suffolk Street; Osborn similarly; and numerous artists, including the Mrs. Harrison, Duffield, and Oliver, who could expect a place at any of the London exhibitions (though not necessarily a prominent one, since they practised the lowly genres of still life and landscape) bothered to send to Suffolk Street too, though the Society seems to have remained what it set out to be: a poor relation to the Academy.

From the early 1830's, the SBA had held Winter Exhibitions and shows of deceased artists' works, as well as the annual summer exhibitions, and in 1847 it set up a school - which included classes for ladies, involving models "classically and picturesquely draped" [141] - and the size of the shows increased during the

period here being discussed (the 1850 show had 345 contributors, the 1870 show 545), but it grew not at all in status. For women, though, it proved more accessible than any other of the London galleries, for it shows a higher proportion of female exhibitors, in the period, than any other regular exhibition, with the exception of the SFA (see table). This is reflective of its usefulness to women as a sort of refuge from the rigours of the Academy, which yet was a reasonably respected arena for both oil and watercolour artists.

Artists tired of the hegemony of the Academy, and willing to openly disdain Academy-inspired or Academy-related exhibiting policy, however, could show with the Free Exhibition, from 1848, at Portland Street. It was as the Free Exhibition that the National Institution was set up in 1848: "The objects here sought to be attained are, as far as possible, Freedom for the Artist, Certainty of Exhibition for his (sic) works, and the Improvement of Public Taste", said the catalogue. It was chiefly, quite evidently, in opposition to the hierarchical and exclusive principles on which the Royal Academy exhibitions were mounted and the casual and high-handed way in which those same exhibitions were expedited; meant as a radical move, it was heartily greeted as such in some quarters; the Art-Union wrote:

> "Various causes have operated to render this project advisable, indeed, absolutely necessary. It is notorious that nearly three thousand works of Art are annually rejected by the Royal Academy, the British Institution, and the other Societies, for 'want of room'. Every year the catalogues record this startling - may we not say this appalling - fact. The Society of British Artists are famous for taking care of themselves, and for giving little or no chance to mere contributors. The two Watercolour Societies hang no pictures but their own; while the charge for admission to each of our Exhibitions is a serious bar to their utility; keeping effectually out of the reach of their influence the humbler orders, and rendering even the comparatively rich

> content with the enjoyment and instruction to be derived from a single visit." 142

The catalogue of the first exhibition asserted the character of paintings and statues as commercially-viable productions of a person's labour, while the catalogue of 1850 emphasised the wish to put an end to jealousies, rivalries, and disappointments which arose through the artist himself (sic) having no control over the fate of an exhibited work. It was explained, at the time of the 1850 exhibition, that the original intention of holding the shows open free of charge, had proved to be not viable, but that, although an entry charge henceforward had to be made, the exhibition would remain open "free of charge, for the benefit of the working classes" for a fortnight at the end of the season. The other significance of the exhibition's name - the Free Exhibition - had been, the year before, commented on rather sourly by the Illustrated London News, whose correspondent was glad that that original intention, too, had had to be modified in the light of experience:

> "The first (exhibition) was rather a hurried affair, in order that a year might not be lost; and the second was done on a very erroneous principle, of allowing every exhibitor to purchase so many square feet of wall for the arrangement of his own works after his own manner. As may be readily imagined, the Exhibition, though fair to the exhibitors at first sight, was highly injurious to them, and very unfair to the visitors; for the Gallery, by this disinterested kind of arrangement, was made a very motley affair to the visitor - the whole Gallery wearing the appearance of anything but a very harmonious disposal of places, subjects, sizes, pictures, and certainly very little of colour in the whole display. The Association this year has detected its error; and here we have a very pleasing Exhibition, where works are arranged so near as to the level of the eye, that beauties and defects are equally well see." 143

By 1851, the Builder's reviewer could write:

> "We notice with great pleasure the steady progress of this institution, and congratulate the members on the fair promise given that their exhibition will become one of real national interest, and only second in importance to that of the Royal Academy." 144

The conditions of exhibition were, that no copies might be shown, nor any work that had already been shown in London. As with all the other societies here surveyed, there was a commission on sales (5%; by comparison, the SBA, for instance, charged 10%) and a deposit required of purchasers. Unlike its companion exhibitions, however, the Free recognised in its catalogues the artist's membership of other exhibiting bodies. The officials of the Free's organisation were 26 Proprietary Members, whose number included Trustees, and Honorary Secretary, a Treasurer, and a President; these were all male, at the Free's inception.

Exhibitors in 1848 numbered something short of 100, of which 12 were female [145]; this proportion went down over the years although the number rose; in 1861, the latest year for which figures of exhibitors are available, the total of exhibitors was 166, of which 16 were women. A number of these were very constant: the National Institution was the principal outlet for Fanny McIan, for instance, who had left the British Institution for it, along with her husband Robert McIan; Howitt, in her short exhibiting career, favoured the National more than any other venue; withers showed there a lot in its early years, though she was mostly seen at Suffolk Street and the SFA; Mrs. Oliver was a constant exhibitor, despite her attendance at other galleries too. On occasion it was the work of these artists that redeemed the National from its apparently generally unsatisfactory position; the Athenaeum critic greeted Howitt's "Margaret returning from the Fountain" of 1854 thus:

> "From a crowd of smooth incarnations of smug vanity and complacent ugliness, - from portraits of self-applauding nobles and portraits of very common commoners that very few applaud, - from widows at Nain and widows who are inane,

> - from firework phantasmagorias and ballet-dancing angels, - from sketches from Nature that look as unreal as imagination, and imaginings much more sober than Nature, we turn with pleasure to 'Faust's Margaret returning from the Fountain' (No.28), by Miss A.M. Howitt. It is like stepping out of the glare and noise of a country theatre into the soft lustre and dewy freshness of a May morning..." 146

On a similar vein, the Spectator critic welcomed the exhibits of Augusta Withers in the 1851 show in the following manner:

> "Mrs. Withers' truly admirable 'Partridge with brood of young ones', which could not be better, and one or two others by the same lady, are about the only things challenging attention in the watercolour room." 147

This, in the light of the Art Journal's comment of 1858 that, "this collection is but an exhibition of landscape art" [148], and of the remembrance that the National was the context in which some of the first Preraphaelite paintings were shown, leads to the conjecture that a young artist might show at the National in order to draw more attention than the same work elsewhere might receive; and that an artist whose works did not attract attention in the old-established galleries where the walls might be awash with hundreds of examples of every genre, could hope that a work would actually be noticed here, even if it might not necessarily be praised. How many artists supported the National on ideological grounds, is almost impossible to say: as far as the women there were concerned, it offered a less overtly discriminatory situation, though as long as opportunity was based on monetary resource, they were bound to be at a disadvantage; the women who did show there were so various, as artists, that no generalisation can be made as to why they found the National attractive. Howitt's work was, apparently, recognisably Preraphaelite [149], so one can see it as being at home at the National; on the other hand, it was at the National that Florence Claxton exhibited her

satire on the Preraphaelite circle, "The Judgment of Paris", in 1860 [150]; portraitists were there (Ambrosini Jérôme), domestic genre painters (Elizabeth Hunter and Elizabeth Murray), landscapists also (Oliver) and others [151], both watercolourists and painters in oil - but perhaps this very conglomeration was the feature which was attractive to artists who found it difficult to get a fair showing anywhere, and were certainly not suffering from too much exposure in London galleries; rather, the reverse. The Builder commented on this democratic variety, which had been the Institution's main theoretical point, in 1857:

> "Ten years have elapsed since certain adventurous and self-dependent artists resolved to afford themselves and others more extended opportunity of becoming known and appreciated according to their particular merits, by the somewhat hazardous experiment of allowing all who chose to contribute to the expenses and formations of a Fine Art exhibition, a fair proportion of the most favourable positions, irrespective of professional precedence. For a season or two the result was necessarily a heterogeneous combination of the good, bad, and indifferent; but sufficiently encouraging for its originators to persevere, and by a little judicious restriction and modification of first intentions, gradually to attain success." 152

However, the same paper observed in 1860 that "The collection as a whole is not a good one. Some of the pictures, indeed, are atrocious" - a comment which might be seen at the same time as an omen and a possible explanation of the exhibition's closure in the following year, which is otherwise unexplained. [153] As the writer above of 1857 observes: "the advantages offered by this institution are palpable to newcomers", and the small ratio of women at its exhibitions can only be explained by the fact that, at the start, it very properly had a radical character which, just as it appealed to such as Howitt, would have frightened off other women; and by the fact that the payment required for one's space could have put women off who, ironically, therefore, would have been better able to show (free of charge) at the Academy,

which in other respects was much more opposed to their interests than was the National Institution.

The London exhibition scene was expanded and enlivened in the latter '60's and early '70's by additional galleries: the General Exhibition of watercolour work started in 1865, eventually becoming the Dudley when it took up residence in the gallery of that name. It was an auspicious development for women, as has already been implied; the Art Journal observed in its second year:

> "... the rights of women are fully recognised within these walls. No other gallery, with the single exception of that occupied by the Society of Female Artists, contains so formidable an array of lady-exhibitors... We are glad to say that woman's work ranks on a an equality with that of man." 154

This equality, consequent of a generally liberal policy which some found refreshing

> ("Among other merits of this exhibition, it is less stationary than its more venerable rivals. The Dudley Committee opens its doors to all, has wisely refused to coagulate into a society, and not only brings forward unknown talents for the older societies to select from, but actually shows advance and improvement in many of its regular contributors.") 155

and others found amusing

> ("The exhibitions held in the Dudley Gallery have established a reputation for eccentricity; it is never known what strange product may not here turn up. The waifs and strays of talent congregate on this favoured spot, and genius with just a pleasant touch of insanity finds congenial companionship.") 156

lasted, unlike the Free's good intentions, beyond the first few years of exhibition. In 1868, the Saturday Review reported:

> "Lady-artists, we are glad to observe, are seen in the Dudley to advantage - all the more so because content to be simple, and in the small. Miss Wells, Miss Solomon, and Miss Starr each exhibit studies true and good"; 157

while the Art Journal, without displaying such qualifications, observed in 1871:

> "The Dudley Gallery has from the first been a favourite resort of the ladies: a dozen ladies, at the very least, here distinguish themselves: there is, in fact, a greater display of female talent in this room than in the gallery in Conduit Street, exclusively set apart for the benefit of ladies... (....) The Dudley Gallery is further distinguished by the best flower-painting now to be met with, and again we have to acknowledge our obligation to the ladies." 158

The artists whom the critic above goes further to specify give a sufficient idea of the range of women who used the Dudley in its first decade or so: Adelaide Claxton, Marie Spartali (later Stillman), Lucy Madox Brown, Lucette Barker, Clara Montalba, Constance Phillott, Ellen Hill, Caroline Eastlake, Emily Armstrong, and Helen Coleman. They tended to belong to the younger generation, and to exhibit elsewhere as well, although to less conspicuous effect than at the Dudley, where, as is evident, they were given some prominence. The same generation benefited from the establishment of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, though here the opportunity was more limited since it depended on the invitation of the Gallery's instigator, Sir Coutts Lindsay.

The Grosvenor therefore had a somewhat exclusive basis, deriving its exhibitions as it did from the invitations of one person, although, in the words of the Athenaeum's reviewer in 1877,

> "An examination of this Exhibition will convince the visitor that a noble and cultivated taste has been at work in the task of selection, that invitations have

issued in a generous and liberal spirit." 159

Female exhibitors in the first show reflected the mixture of the fashionable, recherché and avant-garde which was to characterise the shows, both for its supporters and for its detractors; they included Louise Jopling, Marie Spartali, (by then Mrs. Stillman), Helen Coleman (by then Mrs. Angell), and Margaret Gillies, and amounted to nine, among a total of 64 artists. The next year, women numbered 11 out of 96 contributors, and included notably Sophie Anderson, Lady Waterford, and Princess Louise, while those already mentioned were again represented. A similar pattern showed in the third year (1879), when the female contributors - additionally among them Starr, Anna Lea Merritt, Clara and Henrietta Montalba, Evelyn Pickering - numbered 22 among a crowd of 131 artists. The Grosvenor, thus, can be seen as perhaps more symbolically than actually important and useful for female artists. It was symbolic of an anti-Academy impetus which must be in their interest -

> "On these walls, fitly enshrined and free from incongruous influences, the choice pictures of living masters comparatively unknown were to be displayed, and here the true status of British art was to be illustrated, apart from the littleness of committees, the traditions of academies, the spite of cliques, the ignorance and stupidities of half-cultured painters, jealous of their betters" 160

- but still determined by the pontificating male (just one, this time, rather than 40) who, from the evidence, had tastes as particular as those of the Academy, though they ranged over different ground.

The various enterprises of Gambart greatly expanded the opportunities for exhibition in London, also, from quite early in the period. The French gallery opened in 1854, devoted to the work of artists from Gambart's native country, but it became beneficial to British artists with its Winter Exhibition which

began in 1853. The proportion of women shown here was low at the start, and remained so (e.g. 1858: 12 out of 71, 1868: 3 out of 124), but most of the more prominent female artists of the time showed there at some time or another. (The French Exhibitions, themselves, were often dominated by one woman, of course: the predictable Rosa Bonheur; the Builder's review of the opening show observed: "Perhaps the greatest attraction of the Gallery will be considered by the public generally to be the cattle pictures by Mlle. Rosa Bonheur. As the productions of a lady, they are prefectly astonishing..." [161]) It was Gambart who gave Bridell Fox and Bodichon their own shows, in 1859, 1861, 1864, and 1866, also. [162]

The Crystal Palace exhibitions, though difficult to find information on, must be included in the proliferating exhibition arenas of the 1850's. Annual catalogues of the paintings and sculptures shown in this gallery, after it was moved to Sydenham, are not available, but among the women who evidently showed there, to judge from specific press mentions of them, are Bodichon, Ward, Osborn, Margaret Robbinson, Brownlow, Rebecca Solomon, Howitt, Annie Mutrie, Kate Swift, Jane Bowkett, Jessie McLeod, Charlotte James, Margaret Backhouse, and Charlotte Babb. The first four won prizes at these exhibitions in (respectively) 1873, 1872 and 1873, 1864, and 1869. [163] A report in the Illustrated London News of the Crystal Palace show of 1865 noted a roll of artists contributing which included six female exhibitors out of 77: the writer does not comment upon this proportion. [164]

The Amateur Exhibitions, erratic though they were, supplied many women with an exhibition opportunity which they had not before enjoyed, but which became redundant once the SFA was established. The first Amateur Exhibition was held in 1850, to critical enthusiasm, and women predominated in this and in the few subsequent shows: in reviewing the third show, the Builder noted that "The ladies take the lead, indisputably..." [165] Gambart took over the gallery in which these exhibitions were held in 1853

or 1854, and it is not unlikely that this is why they ceased as a regular event. Gambart's biographer, Jeremy Maas, seems uncertain, himself, on this point, but it seems a probable explanation for the demise of what was, from journalistic accounts, a successful and welcomed event.[166]

The exhibition season expanded, too, as well as the exhibition space: the concept of a winter exhibition had been presented first by Grundy's 1849 attempt, and in 1852 the Builder's critic declared that "The Winter Exhibition may now be considered as established..."[167], while a decade later the same pages offered the observation that

> "Winter exhibitions of pictures, drawings, and sketches have become so much in vogue of late, that they may now be as confidently expected in their turn as their more important precursors of earlier date... thanks to these offshoots of after-growth, the distance between August and February is most pleasantly relieved and shortened. Cornhill and its neighbourhood have become the Pall-Mall of the east..." 168

The SFA was in the minority in holding no winter augmentation to its regular show, but, then, its regular show opened so early in the season as to almost qualify for such an appellation. However, women were given a particular winter place by the efforts of Henry Wallis, to whom Gambart handed over the management of the French Gallery in 1861, and who bought the lease of that gallery in 1867: in 1865, Wallis arranged a winter show at the Suffolk Street gallery "with a section representing French, Flemish, and female practice in particular as a special adjunct"[169], while his first winter show as lessee of the French Gallery featured a woman's work as its special attraction (Jane Benham Hay's "Florentine Procession").

The mid-century period saw a rich and varied expansion of exhibition opportunities in the capital, perhaps ultimately inspired by the

Great Exhibition of 1851 or the feelings and ideas that went with it, from which artists generally benefitted. An expansion in exhibition opportunity would not necessarily, in itself, have proved relevant to female artists, but given that this expansion took place in the period of increasing ambition on women's part and of developing areas of serious activity for them to explore, it evidently greatly assisted their rise to a position of notice in the Victorian art world. The first phase of increasing numbers of exhibitions in the early 1850's, coupled with the persistence of anti-Academy feeling, followed by the addition of regular exhibition galleries to the London circuit in the 1860's and 1870's [170], which exemplified a certain modern spirit built upon that anti-Academy feeling, gave women varied exhibition opportunities from which - to go on the evidence available - they derived equally varied benefit. This is the age of the rise of the one-artist exhibition, also, and it is reflective of the marked but still moderate progress which female artists made in the field of exhibition in this period, that there were some one-woman exhibitions in London during the period, but that they were very few and little-publicised. [171] Even at the end of the period, it seems that the only female artist who was seen as strong (and interesting) enough to stand quite on her own before the public would be not a British one, but a French (Bonheur or Browne), although Elizabeth Thompson's popularity was to change that.

Female Exhibitors in the Shows of London Societies, 1850-1879

	SFA[1]	RA	SBA	OWS	New[2]	BI	NI[3]	Ams.	Dudley(wclr)	Dudley(oil)
1850			46	4	9	17	6			
1851		61	42	4	7	20	7	32		
1852		84	43	5	8	23	10			
1853		79	54	5	8	26	13	96		
1854		84	48	5	9	28	15			
1855		90	69		8	25	14			
1856		108	63	4	9	25	15			
1857	149	91	62	4	8	28	13			
1858	275	99	52	4	8	26	15			
1859	246	93	61	4	8	28	22			
1860	200	48	63	4	6	26	18	104		
1861	165	49	60	4	8	23	16			
1862	133	55	70	4	9	24				
1863	111	65	60	4	18	32				
1864	100	60	76	4	9	30				
1865	113	63	70	4	9	29			31	
1866	158	60	89	4	9	36			54	
1867	168	76	81	4	10	34			59	11
1868	164	75	88	4	10				56	19
1869	183	56*	98	4	5				83	13
1870	211	61	73	4	8				76	20
1871	198	59	76	3	8				79	34
1872	186	79	73	3	9				91	43
1873	216	93	86	3	5				85	42
1874	284	92	95	4	7				83	36
1875	301	75	85	4	9				73	34
1876		97	56	5	8				68	39
1877	257	110	76	5	9				92	52
1878	403	95	44	5	7				107	43
1879	429	103	82	6	6				105	45

1. Changed to SLA 1872
2. Later the Institute of Painters in Water-Colour
3. Formerly the Free Exhibition

* In supplementary exhibitions: 67

Notes

1. The former had exhibited in London from 1819, the latter from 1807; other early venturers into the field of public exhibition in London included Fanny Corbaux (from 1829) and various Sharpe sisters: Charlotte (from 1817), Louisa (from 1817), Eliza (from 1817) and Mary-Anne (from 1819).

2. This applies to all the women mentioned above.

3. William Michael Rossetti wrote in 1864: "The one useful result of these exhibitions has been to call attention to the art-movement among the ladies..." (Fine Art Quarterly, v.3, October 1864, p.33).

4. Trevor Fawcett, The Rise of English Provincial Art, Oxford, 1974, p.3.

5. Exhibitions of drawings and sketches by amateur artists, the Gallery, 121, Pall Mall, 1853; for some history of the set setting up of the Amateurs' Exhibitions, see Jeremy Maas, Gambart, Prince of the Victorian art world, London, 1975, ch.5.

6. See Fawcett, op. cit., p.1.

7. These practices were taken up by female artists as they tried to emulate the male pattern in order to achieve a similar success to the male artist: see, for instance, Ward and Brownlow below, Chapter 6.

8. "The London Exhibitions of 1861", Fraser's Magazine, November 1861, p.580; Rossetti was an occasional contributor to the magazine between 1861 and 1865.

9. Spectator, April 2, 1853, p.326.

10. ibid, November 23, 1850, p.1122: this notice congratulated the instigators of the first winter exhibition; for a similar welcome of additional exhibition in the 'off season', see the Builder, April 12, 1851, p.233; and see below, p.230

11. Elizabeth Eastlake, Mrs. Grote, a sketch, London, 1880, ch.5,p.98.

12. Harriet Grote, Personal Life of George Grote, London, 1873, p.241.

13. The opening time of the SFA varied with each year, it seems. The first show had opened in June, but the commencement date became progressively earlier, until in 1865 the show opened on January 28th, and this 'early rising' continued from thence.

14. The Builder, May 10, 1856, p.257; the letter was not published in the Art Journal, nor the Athenaeum, nor the Times, neither was such a communication even reported in these organs. It was referred to in the Builder as part of that paper's review of the Academy exhibition that year.

15. Illustrated London News, May 30, 1857, p.521.

16. Art Journal, May 1, 1857, p.163; truly, "all our exhibitions of late years" contained increasing proof of that women were capable of artistic achievement, but scant critical acknowledgement of it can be found before this point.

17. Spectator, May 9, 1857, p.496.

18. Such separation only recognised openly the tacit categorisation of women in a different class from men which prevailed generally in the period. Some critics saw nothing to object to in such a move (the Builder, April 3, 1858, p.237; the Times, May 25, 1857, p.12), while others found it a threatening affront to a belief in male equitableness (the Illustrated London News, below). Among women who objected to the open segregation, Jameson saw it as rather unnecessarily hostile (Letter 220 to Ottilie von Goether, c.1847, in Letters of Anna Jameson, ed. G.H. Needler, 1939, p.233 and introduction to Social Life in Germany, London, 1840) although she recognised that men made such moves necessary (introduction Sisters of Charity and the Communion of Labour, 1859, p.xvii); while Anna Howitt had an optimistic faith in men which made such moves repellent to her (An Art Student in Munich, preface to first edition). For a modern discussion of what such segregation meant, see Parker and Pollock, Old Mistresses, London, 1981, ch.1.

19. See the Times review of the first exhibition, most unpleasantly condescending, and apologetic and defensive of the work to be seen in that and any future shows (May 25, 1857, p.12) and see below, note 23; and the Builder's review in 1859, indicating that the exhibitions were to be supported, not for artistic but for social reasons: "The society, as likely to open a wider field for the independent striving of women, demands our best support" (February 26, 1859, p.154). Both these reviews show the low expectations which many brought to their evaluation of the Society's exhibitions, which looked to be confirmed, not contradicted, however well-meaning was their approach (as it was in the case of the Builder, which often ran articles on the topic of women artists in the 1860's - see, for instance, "Woman and the Fine Arts", March 11, 1865, p.170 (a report of a lecture by Francis Palgrave which became the article in Macmillan's Magazine already quoted); "Woman's Work in the Art-World", April 8, 1865, p.237; "Woman and the Arts", January 6, 1866, p.7).

20. The Times, for instance, was erratic in its coverage, and the Critic seems not to have bothered, after a first flush of interest.

21. Illustrated London News, June 6, 1857, p.545.

22. Times, June 1, 1857, p.9.

23. Englishwoman's Review, June 27, 1857, p.11; it is the second Times review of the show which is referred to: the first was worse; was, indeed, a very unsatisfactory affair, taking a defensive line from the start: "There has been of late a lively movement in favour of opening up new channels for female industry... Since the exercise of the pencil is admitted to ladies, and a considerable amount of artistic talent is known to exist in England among all classes of women, a society has been set on foot by a few active and beneficient persons, with the object of collecting the works of female artists into an exhibition for sale... If it be objected that the effect

of a Female Artists' society will be to swell the amount of mediocrity which is annually thrown upon the town in the shape of drawings and paintings, we would reply that in all departments of art, gradations of talent must exist..." (May 25, p.12).

24. Art Journal, July 1, 1857, p.215.

25. For another satirical diatribe on such matters, see "Elegant Arts for Ladies", The Leisure Hour, May 1, 1869, p.293.

26. Punch, July 18, 1857, p.27.

27. Athenaeum, June 27, 1857, p.825.

28. Englishwoman's Review, July 11, 1857, p.141 the name assigned to this and business statements put out by the Society was L. Caron, but when in 1859 the catalogue listed for the first time the Society's personnel, the Secretary was named as E. Dundas Murray; the post was taken over in 1866 by M. Atkinson; indeed, the following year saw a markedly higher response to the opportunity presented to women artists: the number of works rose from 358 to 582, and the number of artists thereby represented from 149 to 277.

29. Art Journal, October 1, 1857, p.326.

30. ibid, December 1, 1857, p.384.

31. This is probably an indirect reference to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, whose "Aurora Leigh" had been published late in 1856.

32. Illustrated London News, April 3, 1858, p.351.

33. The idea that women necessarily worked on a small scale died hard, and often surfaced in critical appraisals; for instance, "Miss Steers (has) contributed clever bits of landscape provoking in their smallness, and womanly in the old-fashioned acceptation of the epithet as implying that they must be sought for - so unobtrusive is their scale" (Athenaeum, April 23, 1853, p.504, reviewing the exhibition of the New Society of Watercolour Painters).

34. Illustrated London News, April 24, 1858, p.423.

35. The Examiner quoted in Englishwoman's Review, vol.6, April 1871, p.149; see also the Times critique of that year's show: "Unless female artists can hold their own with men they had better, we submit, not exhibit at all..." (February 15, 1871, p.4).

36. Art Journal, March 1, 1870, p.89.

37. Illustrated London News, February 8, 1868, p.134 and March 5, 1864, p.238.

38. Fine Arts Quarterly, October 1863, p.340; Rossetti, of course, knew several female artists, both who supported the SFA (Bodichon) and who did not (Howitt).

39. Spectator, February 16, 1861, p.165.

40. The writer presumably means Anna Mary Howitt, who had married Alaric Watts in 1859; though she had, in any case, only shown once at the Society ("From a Window", 1858).

41. Athenaeum, February 11, 1860, p.211; the last is probably a reference to EVB, or Eleanor Boyle. It is unlikely that MEE (Mary Ellen Edwards) is also meant.

42. Illustrated London News, February 4, 1865, p.110.

43. Art Journal, March 1, 1867, p.88.

44. ibid, October 1, 1872, p.266.

45. Illustrated London News, January 26, 1867, p.87; thus also Illustrated Times in 1866: "... the committee should use every effort to prevail on the first female artists of the day to become members and exhibitors. Mrs. Ward, Miss Ellen Edwards, Miss Mutrie - these are a few names which suggest themselves" (January 20, 1866, p.43). But see below, note 93, for more of this critic's ideas about women artists' place in exhibition.

46. Englishwoman's Review, vol.7, April 1868, p.467; the tone here is reminiscent of that first Times review which the EWR so objected to, but an important difference is that the point is here being made in the light of experience and by the women themselves, not as a prejudgment and by a condescending male.

47. Woman's Opinion, April 18, 1874, p.68.

48. The moves were not dictated by the scale of the Exhibitions: after the expansion of the second year, numbers dropped to around 300 pieces (1859, 311; 1860, 319; 1861, 333), dropped into the high 200's in the mid '60's (1862, 283; 1863, 269; 1864, 253; 1865, 276) then soared into the 400's for the rest of the decade.

49. Athenaeum, April 25, 1863, p.559.

50. Illustrated London News, April 25, 1863, p.463.

51. Punch noticed this with glee: "... we have one great fault to find. We do strongly object to the Secretary and Check-takers. We have nothing to say against those gentlemen, excepting that they are gentlemen. They should have belonged to the opposite sex. That round collar, that black coat, those Wellington boots, have no right to be in a room that, as they write over railway carriages, is 'Engaged for Ladies'. They are an intrusion, a living anachronism, two black spots on the uniform beauty of the picture. Away with them! Turn them out!" (July 18, 1857, p.27).

52. For Waterford, see below chapter 6; Elizabeth Eastlake, as well as being 'married into the arts', and a writer on aesthetic matters, was an amateur artist (fig.70).

53. Athenaeum, February 4, 1865, p.168.

54. Two of the Society's most stalwart supporters; the former exhibited there 1858/9, 1866/75, 1877, 1880/1 and the latter 1857/8, 1867, 1869/74, 1877/9, 1886.

55. The men were: Arthur Ashpitel, Leonard Collmann, Arthur B.

Cook, Henry Bohn, Henry Gibson, Thomas H. Hills, Arthur Lewis, William Tite.

56. Art Journal, March 1, 1869, p.82.

57. Though they continued to appear! See below, chapter 5, for more on copying at the SFA.

58. Athenaeum, February 9, 1861, p.200.

59. The Art-Student, April 1, 1864, p.53; see also the Illustrated Times, March 5, 1864, p.159.

60. Art Journal, March 1, 1871, p.90.

61. 1858, 277 artists were represented; 1870, 208 artists were represented. See also note 28 above, for scale of shows.

62. It is interesting that the Times review of the first exhibition included a specific disclaimer on the point of discrimination against women in the galleries: "It is no wise intended as a rival exhibition to those already before the public, nor do the female artists wish to imply that they consider themselves unfairly treated by the older societies..." With its tone of quotation from a press release, this might be a reflection of some politic conservatism on the Society's organisers' part.

63. It is notable that the peak year at the RA was the year before the SFA began, and that the Academy's number of women (which had been climbing) began to drop erratically after the SFA's establishment. By contrast, numbers of women at the SBA, BI and Free (NI) seem to have been boosted by the Society's founding.

64. Respectively: Illustrated London News, February 13, 1869, p.167; ibid, February 19, 1859, p.190; Athenaeum, February

65. The same was said to be the case with the Dudley: see for example Art Journal, March 1, 1872, p.74.

66. Illustrated Times, March 5, 1864, p.159.

67. Athenaeum, April 3, 1858, p.439 and February 19, 1870, p.266.

68. ibid, February 19, 1859, p.257.

69. Respectively, Art Journal, June 1, 1859, p.170; ibid, May 1, 1863, p.97; ibid, June 1, 1870, p.168.

70. See the reviews of the 1861 SFA show, when French contributors had been invited.

71. See above, chapter 2, p.117

72. This begs comparison with the contemporary discussion, "Why have there been no great women artists?", begun by American art historian Linda Nochlin in 1971 ("Why are there no great women artists?", Woman in Sexist Society, ed. Gornick and Moran, New York, 1971, p.480 and "Why have there been no great women artists?", Art and Sexual Politics, ed. Hess and Baker, New York, 1973, p.1) and answered by, among others, Eleanor Tufts, Our Hidden Heritage, New York, 1974 and Parker and Pollock, op. cit.

73. Burton, op. cit., p.139.

74. W.J. Laidlay, The Royal Academy, its uses and abuses, London, 1898, p.1; for similar anti-Academy feeling within the mid-century period, see for example "Academicians versus Artists", Saturday Review, May 9, 1863, p.592 and "The Academy, the Chief Commissioner and the National Gallery", Nature and Art, July 1, 1866, p.62; and "Picture Dealers and Picture Societies", The Chromolithograph, January 2, 1869, p.187.

75. The Builder, May 10, 1856, p.257.

76. "... the formation of the Society of Painters in Watercolours was a protest against the RA's treatment of the mdeium as a subordinate branch", T. Boase, English Art 1800/70, Oxford, 1959, p.30.

77. Victoria Magazine, April 26, 1873, no.1, p.5; this was a woman's magazine, but such reports as the one quoted may have been written by a male correspondent.

78. Respectively, Art Life in the West of England, 1863, no.3, p.191; Art Journal, June 1, 1871, p.151; Times, May 13, 1861, p.6 (this work is also one of Bridell Fox's).

79. Critic, May 7, 1859, p.447.

80. Fine Arts Quarterly, October 1864, p.34.

81. Art Journal, June 1, 1858, p.161.

82. Jopling, op. cit., p.11.

83. Laidlay, op. cit., p.48.

84. Saturday Review, June 2, 1860, p.709; the pictures exhibited by these artists at the Academy that year were: Ward, "The first step in life"; Solomon, "Peg Woffington's Visit to Triplet"; Boyce/Wells, "The Child's Crusade"; Robbinson, "What we still see in Chelsea Gardens"; Osborn, "The Governess"; Bridell Fox, "Amongst the ruins, Rome".

85. Illustrated London News, July 27, 1861, p.87; the works exhibited by these artists that year at the Academy were: Osborn, "The Escape of Lord Nithsdale"; Solomon, "The Arrest of a Deserter"; Boyce/Wells, "Peep-bo" and "La Veneziana"; Benham Hay, "Tobias restoring the eyesight of Tobit", and "The Cloister of the Convent of San Domenico"; Macirone, "A Breton Interior".

86. Spectator, June 1, 1861, p.586; the works exhibited at the Academy that year by Bridell Fox was "Departing to join Garibaldi", by Martha Mutrie "Wild Rose" and "Hollyhocks", by Annie Mutrie "Orchids" and "York and Lancaster" and by Hunt "The shy Damsel".

87. Times, May 26, 1862, p.10; Critic, May 10, 1862, p.468; Spectator, May 31, 1862, p.605.

88. These artists included Benham Hay, Wells/Boyce, Solomon, Osborn and Ward.

89. See, for instance, Athenaeum, March 6, 1869, p.347 on Ward's "Scene from the Life of the Old Pretender".

90. Art Journal, July 1, 1857, p.216.

91. Thomas Smith, Recollections of the British Institution, London, 1860, p.4 and p.9.

92. See H.T. Wood, The History of the Royal Society of Arts, London, 1913, p.163 for more on Andrus, also Redgrave's Dictionary of Artists, London, 1874, p.10; ibid, p.368 for Serres; ibid, p.389 for Spilsbury.

93. The legalistic pronoun is perhaps used advisedly: "it (the SFA) has much to recommend it, beyond the fact that it offers a legitimate exercise for those feminine pencils which have encroached too much of late on other galleries," Illustrated Times, February 23, 1867, p.123.

94. Art Journal, March 1, 1858, p.77.

95. Athenaeum, March 25, 1854, p.380.

96. Spectator, February 28, 1852, p.206; in two years' time, the same critic's verdict was even worse (Spectator, February 11, 1854, p.158) and in the same vein, see the Artist, February 17, 1855, p.47.

97. Art Journal, March 1, 1861, p.93.

98. A letter to the Art Journal in February 1867, defending the Institution against possible closure, made this point, saying: "It was not merely an exhibition-room for the sale and display of pictures; for the exhibitions of the works of the old masters, chiefly from the collections of the Directors, afforded a field for the study of the highest class of works, an opportunity presented by no other Art-body in the country" (Art Journal, February 1, 1867, p.52); the letter was signed "An Exhibitor at the 'British'".

99. Athenaeum, February 9, 1850, p.164.

100. Such as "Cottage children" (1843), "Playmates" (1847), "The gleaner's child" (1850), "Child and parrot" (1851), "I know my lesson" (1853).

101. Art Journal, August 1, 1867, p.199.

102. ibid, November 1, 1867, p.245.

103. For instance, biographical accounts of Fanny Corbaux always mention the benefit she derived from study at the Institution.

104. The 'New British Institution' was set up in 1870, continuing for several years.

105. The reviewer is Edmond About, the source unknown.

106. Roget, op. cit., vol.1, p.1.

107. ibid, p.210; in the minutes of the meetings of 15 and 22 July, 1807, further resolutions concerning women are reported.

108. See Roget, op. cit., bk.4, ch.1 (p.201ff) for a detailed account of the first exhibition.

109. ibid, p.397.

110. These artists entered the Society in 1823, 1805 (1809), 1821, and 1823 respectively.

111. Art Journal, June 1, 1850, p.192.

112. Athenaeum, May 11, 1850, p.510.

113. Roget, op. cit., vol.2, p.339.

114. Gillies had entered the Society in 1852.

115. Roget, op. cit., vol.2, p.301.

116. ibid, p.337.

117. Art Journal, March 1, 1849, p.98.

118. ibid, June 1, 1874, p.168; Times, February 5, 1875, p.4; critical appreciation of her work was by no means as glowing as this a few years later, however: see, for instance, Tinsley's Magazine, Jan/June 1880, vol.26, p.571 or Illustrated London News, June 11, 1881, p.579.

119. The others were Mary-Anne and Charlotte; see Dictionary of National Biography, vol.17, p.1362.

120. William Rossetti describes them as "a family named Harrison, in which the mother and one or two of the daughters were flower painters", but Christina Rossetti refers to one of them as Fanny (Family Letters of Christina Rossetti, ed. W.M. Rossetti, London, 1908, p.24), which contradicts Clayton, who notes Maria and her sister Harriet as flower painters in their mother Mary's footsteps (Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.280). The Dictionary of National Biography indexes the mother, but only her two sons, George and Henry, along with her (DNB, vol.25, p.37).

121. Hilda and Ellen also practised painting, Henrietta sculpture.

122. Roget, op. cit., vol.2, p.11.

123. These artists had joined the Society in 1839, 1837, 1845, 1846, 1835, 1842, 1849, 1841, and 1846 respectively.

124. Athenaeum, June 27, 1857, p.825.

125. Respectively, Saturday Review, May 22, 1858, p.532; Spectator, May 1, 1852, p.423; ibid, May 13, 1854, p.522; Critic, June 15, 1849, p.209.

126. Respectively, Spectator, May 3, 1862, p.495; ibid, April 28, 1866, p.467; Critic, April 28, 1860, p.531.

127. Critic, May 3, 1862, p.447.

128. See, for instance, Times, April 24, 1865, p.12; Spectator, March 4, 1865, p.244.

129. Athenaeum, May 1, 1852, p.495.

130. Times, February 13, 1872, p.4.

131. Hesketh Hubbard, An outline history of the Royal Society of British artists, London, 1937, p.11.

132. ibid, p.15.

133. ibid, p.30.

134. Presumably, with the intention of deterring defection to the Academy.

135. Art Journal, May 1, 1858, p.141.

136. Spectator, April 3, 1858, p.378 and April 2, 1853, p.246.

137. Athenaeum, March 31, 1866, p.435.

138. Illustrated London News, November 11, 1865, p.463.

139. Athenaeum, March 28, 1857, p.410.

140. For example, "Among the animal painters... in this class, the watercolours of a lady with whose name we had not yet been familiar, Mrs. Withers, stand supreme. These are not only the best here, but would be extraordinary anywhere..." Critic, July 1, 1850, p.335 of the National Institution show.

141. Art-Union, November 1, 1847, p.389.

142. Art-Union, January 1, 1848, p.28.

143. Illustrated London News, March 31, 1849, p.211.

144. The Builder, April 19, 1851, p.247.

145. These artists were Mrs. Paulson, M.A. Barker, Cleaver, Mrs. Pratt, Mrs. McIan, Mrs. Robertson, Mme. Mühlenfeldt, Mrs. Oliver, Sutherland, Mrs. Bessett, Nancy Rayner, Nicholls.

146. Athenaeum, March 18, 1854, p.346.

147. Spectator, April 19, 1851, p.378.

148. Art Journal, April 1, 1858, p.109; the critic, in fairness, let it be said, is retailing a view which he finds everywhere voiced.

149. "... the general treatment of the picture is evidently studied under PR influence" (Illustrated London News, March 25, 1854, p.278); "... the same Pre-Raphaelite school to which Miss Howitt, perhaps unconsciously, inclines..." (Athenaeum, March 18, 1854, p.346); "an attempt in the Millais school..." (Critic, March 15, 1854, p.163 of "Margaret returning.."). Howitt's Preraphaelitism could probably be more correctly termed Nazarenism, given her education in art.

150. For a discussion of this drawing, see W.E. Fredeman, "Pre-Raphaelites in Caricature", Burlington Magazine, vol.102, 1960, p.523; the drawing is in the collection of Ralph Dutton, esq. (Fredeman's interest is rather in the Preraphaelite artists than in Claxton, so he gives no information as to whether the artist is anti-Preraphaelitism, or simply using it as a topical butt for a visual joke.)

151. Jerome showed at the National 1859/61; Hunter 1853/61; Murray 1857/60.

152. The Builder, March 21, 1857, p.161.

153. Catalogues for the exhibitions of the Institution, kept in the V and A Library, cease in 1861, as do reviews of the exhibition in the periodicals which had theretofore shown a consistent interest in the gallery; none of these papers (which include the Builder, the Athenaeum, the Art Journal, and the Critic) apparently make any mention, in 1862, of the gallery's ceasing to function, but one must assume that it did.

154. Art Journal, March 1, 1866, p.71.

155. Times, February 11, 1871, p.4.

156. Saturday Review, November 6, 1869, p.606.

157. ibid, November 11, 1868, p.684; this was a review of the oil show: the pictures shown by these artists that year were, Augusta Wells: "Toinette", Starr: "Quiet Hours" and "A Syrian Orange Girl", Solomon: "Helena" and "A Study from Nature".

158. Art Journal, March 1, 1871, p.85; in 1865, the Dudley show included 53 works by female artists, in 1866 63, in 1867 83, in 1868 82 - these rising figures occurred within shows that averagely totalled a number in the upper 600's. Companion exhibitions of oils began in 1867, which were smaller shows, containing about half the number of works in the watercolour shows; some women who showed watercolours also exhibited oils, but there were fewer women artists altogether in the oil exhibitions (though the proportion was not very different).

159. Athenaeum, May 5, 1877, p.583; extraordinarily, this review ran to two pages, waxing particularly enthusiastic over Burne Jones (who was represented by "Venus' Mirror", "The Days of Creation", and "The Beguiling of Merlin"). Of the female exhibitors, only Spartali/Stillman is mentioned, and cursorily.

160. ibid.

161. The Builder, May 6, 1854, p.238.

162. For accounts of these shows, see the Art Journal, May 1, 1861, p.159; Illustrated London News, July 16, 1864, p.55.

163. Bodichon for an unidentified watercolour (gold, 1873); Ward for "Going to Market, Picardy" (silver, 1872) and for an unidentified historical picture (gold, 1973); Osborn for "Half the world knows not how the other half lives" (gold, 1864); Robbinson for "Summer Afternoon at Strawberry Hill" (bronze, 1869).

164. Illustrated London News, August 1865, p.118; the women in question were Brownlow, Fox, Swift, Osborn, Solomon and Blunden.

165. The Builder, May 8, 1852, p.295.

166. See Maas, op. cit., p.63.

167. The Builder, December 11, 1852, p.785.

168. ibid, November 29, 1862, p.853.

169. ibid, November 4, 1865, p.778; see Maas, op. cit. for more on Gambart and Wallis' business relationship. See below, chapter 5, for more on Benham Hay's work.

170. In addition to those new regular shows already mentioned, the Black and White shows, at the Egyptian Hall, from 1872, should be noted as giving a particular exhibition opportunity to graphic artists. EVB was prominent here in the latter part of the decade.

171. Bodichon and Fox have been mentioned; Mrs. F. Thomas had a show at 20, Cockspur Street, in December 1867 (see the Chromolithograph, December 7, 1867, p.46); Osborn had a show at Goupil's in 1887 (see Daily News, December 2, 1887); for an account of the joint showing of Thompson's "Roll Call", "Quatre Bras" and "Balaclava" at the Fine Art Society galleries in 1876, see the Art Journal, 1876, p.190

CHAPTER 4: PATRONAGE AND EMPLOYMENT

That the following account of patronage and employment of women artists in the mid-century will be somewhat uneven is not inappropriate, since their experience in these fields was, indeed, to judge by the evidence, erratic and not susceptible to easy generalisation. The evidence itself, however, is fragmentary - as tends to be the case with patronage, because of the number of private and unrecorded transactions involved - and whether this indicates the simple nature of the situation, or an indifference within the period itself to the fate of women at the hands of patrons and employers, or a neglect in latter times of women's place in this aspect of the mid-Victorian art world, it means that the pattern of patronage and employment of women artists in the 1850's, 1860's and 1870's can be drawn only very sketchily, and drawn from the experience of considerably fewer women than were actually active in the search for patronage, of all sorts. Patronage is a form of employment, of course, but has enjoyed a special sense in art-historical writing, so will be examined here primarily in that traditional sense, of meaning the purchase or commissioning of works from artists; while its less specialised sense, of implying attention paid to an artist with professional benefit being derived by the artist from the attention paid, will also be considered - and the notion of employment perhaps springs more readily to mind, in some cases of this secondary sense, than does the word patronage.

Women who seem to have been unsuccessful in the search for the different forms of patronage, were not necessarily, in fact, so, it must be noted; so that their absence here demonstrates the lack of evidence as to their patronage or employment, rather than the absence of that patronage or employment. In similar vein, in the cases of women of whosefortunes in this sphere some evidence does remain, generalisations can be made only guardedly as to what the evidence that has not survived, would have told. Generally speaking, however, it seems very likely (both from evidence and from the lack of a greater amount thereof) that women artists were rather in possession of a clientèle than a patron or

patrons. That is to say, by and large, the female artist was bought rather than commissioned, and, as the period wore on, even employed rather than commissioned. Individual cases will be considered that both support and are exceptions to this generalisation, in the contemporary climate of patronage of the time.

The most familiar aspect of the question of patronage in the mid-Victorian period - so familiar, indeed, as to be by now almost a truism - is the rise to prominence as buyers of art of the middle classes, both as patrons and as the artist's clientèle. The catalogue of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 referred to this phenomenon, in terms which echo many another contemporary commentator:

> "As relish for art has spread with culture, the middle class has increased in numbers and wealth: and the painter has at length come to look on them as his (sic) truest patrons. Untrained to the appreciation of old pictures, too honest to affect a taste he does not possess, the middle-class buyer seeks for works which represent the scenes he knows, the aspects of things as they appear to him, the faces and manners of his own time, or those of other times contemplated in the spirit of his own." 1

Such comment indicates that what the changing nature of patronage meant, in real terms, was a less highbrow taste and a huge increase in the numbers of people buying art - two trends which are of especial significance in the fortunes of women artists, whose work tended to the truly popular (rather than the grand) and whose names came secondarily (as opposed to firstly) to the patron's eye. However, the following passage, written by Jameson in 1844, shows that, despite the validity of the 'Maecenas bourgeois' notion, it was the history of patronage that still shaped the image of the art-collector, and the age's archetypal art-patron - in the case of Jameson's passage, Samuel Rogers - was by no means a man-in-the-street, though he may have

come of non-aristocratic family:

> "Pictures are for use, for solace, for ornament, for parade; - as invested wealth, as an appendage of rank. Some people love pictures as they love friends; some, as they love music; some, as they love money. And the collectors of pictures take rank accordingly. There are those who collect them for instruction, as a student collects grammars, dictionaries, and commentaries: these are artists; such were the collections of Rubens, of Sir Peter Lely, of the President West, of Lawrence, of Sir Joshua Reynolds. There are those who collect pictures around them as a king assembles his court - as significant of state, as subservient to ornament or pride; such were Buckingham and Talleyrand. There are those who collect pictures as a man speculates in the funds - picture-fanciers, like bird-fanciers, or flower-fanciers - amateur picture-dealers, who buy, sell, exchange, bargain; with whom a glorious Cuyp represents £800 sterling, and a celebrated Claude is £3000 securely invested - safe as a bank; and his is not the right spirit, surely. Lastly, there are those who collect pictures for love, for companionship, for communion; to whom each picture, well-chosen at first, unfolds new beauties - becomes dearer every day; such a one was Sir George Beaumont - such a one is Mr. Rogers." 2

Rogers was, of course, known as a poet, but was also a banker - not a tradesman nor a manufacturer, nor any other sort of industrialist - yet seemed, at his death in 1855, when his collection was revealed to the public at large, through being sold, to personify the patron of the arts; showing to what extent the traditional idea of the patron as a peculiarly refined person, of somewhat special sensitivity, endured into the period that supposedly seer the prevalence of the 'man of the people' as arbiter of taste. Here lurks the distinction between the patron, synonymous with the connoisseur, and the buyer of art, who 'didn't know much, but knew what he liked'. For female artists, the latter was the more promising figure (willing to make a purchase from the works available) than the former (with demands to make on the artist to produce works that suited his pre-formed taste.) The two figures do, however, merge to some extent

in the period, though not necessarily to unanimous applause. Reactions against modern trends in patronage will be returned to when the Art-Union is discussed, but first a look at figures who were approved: John Sheepshanks and Robert Vernon, [3] rather than Rogers, - perhaps more nearly embody the newly-typical middle-class patron. The other major collections of art which were either amassed or dispersed during the mid-century - those of Victoria and Albert, of Ernest Gambart and Louis Flatou, of Elhanan Bicknell, Baron Albert Grant, William Wells, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, of the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery, of the communities of Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham - show that Jameson's description of the phenomenon of patronage as a varied and multi-faceted business, should be combined with Manchester's above, if a true picture of the mid-century art-buying scene is to be painted.

For women artists, the alleged embourgeoisement of patronage seems to have made some overall difference to their marketability, popularity, and commercial success, although in individual cases the effects of the trend towards middle-class participation in the art-market are extremely various. A brief examination of some of the most prominent collections occurring in the period, will prove the point.

The collection of Samuel Rogers was sold in 1855; it contained 536 pictures, among which one item was from a female artist's hand: no.1217, a sketch by Louisa, Lady Waterford. [4] The collection of Robert Vernon, presented to the nation in 1847, consisted of 153 pictures and 5 pieces of sculpture, and was described by Samuel Carter Hall thus:

> "The pictures are the best works of the best painters... Here will be presented to the young, examples of the unwearied application, whereby their authors were exalted into imperishable renown." [5]

Nearly all of those artists who had been "exalted" by Vernon's

patronage into "imperishable renown" were male: of the three female artists represented in the collection (Carpenter, Harriet Arnould Gouldsmith and Jane Nasmyth), works by two of them were refused by the National Gallery taking in the collection (Carpenter's "Lady feeding a Parrot in a Cage" and Arnould's "A Cottage on the Banks of the River"). In 1849, the Art Journal observed that the collection "had been, from time to time, skilfully 'weeded' - certain pictures having been rejected to be replaced by other, and better, productions of the respective painters." [6] On the occasion of the collection's being presented to the nation, two years earlier, the Art Journal had declared that, because of this very approach, Vernon's display amounted to "an assemblage of the best paintings by the best British artists; and enduring monument to their fame, the glory of the country, and the true patriotism of (the collector)." [7] In this light, female painters seem to hold a very tenuous place in the production of high quality art.

The Sheepshanks collection was presented to the nation in 1857, comprising 233 oil paintings and 103 drawings. The collection contained 3 pieces by a woman, all Carpenter's work: "St. Francis" (fig.71), "Ockham Church" and "The Sisters (the artist's two Daughters)" (fig.72); these were all oil paintings. By comparison, Mulready, for instance, was represented by 28 oils and 14 drawings, Rurner by 5 oils and 1 drawing, Constable by 6 oils, and Landseer by 15 oils and 2 drawings. [8]

If a random look at the collections of less celebrated private individuals is taken, the same situation is found: the female names that occur are few, and they crop up irregularly and inconsistently. The Holmes sale of 1858 included, among 181 items, one work by a woman: this was Osborn's "Home Thoughts" (fig.73) of two years previously. [9] The gems of the collection were advertised as being the works of Landseer, Linnell, Nasmyth Senior, Scheffer, Cooper, Faed, Webster, Muller, Horsley and Lauder. The two Capes sales in December 1856 and January 1857 included "The double Lesson" by Sarah Setchell (the first sale)

and "Flowers, etc.," by Annie Mutrie (the second sale); in both cases these artists were the only females represented. [10]
Capes' collection came to public notice again in 1858, when remaining works were sold in two batches in mid-October: on this occasion the only female name appearing was that of Solomon, with her "The fair Student" (no.17). [11] The Bullock sale in 1870 contained work by Bonheur (often the only female artist represented in a collection or sale), and two contemporary British women: "The morning Lesson" by Ward (1855) and Anne Nasmyth's "An Italian Landscape"; the remainder of the collection featured the by then usual names of Maclise, Landseer, Roberts, Stanfield. [12] The Daily News described the collector at the time of the sale in the following terms:

> "Mr. Bullock was well-known as one of the most liberal amateurs in the Midland Counties, and had for the last forty years been a constant purchaser of modern pictures from the various exhibitions, and by many commissions given directly to the artists." 13

not evidently, however, to many female artists. It is apparent from such observations that a collection could be seen to be quite complete without any female work in it: even were a fruit or flower piece wanting, there were male names within the field that would command more prestige and higher price than female, given the phenomenon whereby, even within a generally 'feminine' field, once a male enters he rises to the top. (William Henry Hunt or George Lance, for instance, might recommend themselves to the patron looking for a still-life work. [14]) Another noticeable private sale was that of the Elhanan Bicknell collection, auctioned in 1863 after his death in 1861; the only female artist whom he conspicuously patronized was the elder Mutrie, Martha, [15] a representative for Bicknell of local talent - she was from Manchester - rather than of the city-bred artists who dominated the scene. The Star's description of Bicknell set him up as the mid-Victorian patron par excellence, and sets him with William Wells, Vernon and Sheepshanks as one of the country's principal collectors:

> "... a private Englishman, a man of comparatively obscure position, a man engaged at one time in mere trade; a man not even pretending to resemble a Genoese or Florentine merchant-prince, but simply and absolutely a Londoner of the middle class, actively occupied in business. This Englishman, now no more, had brought together a picture gallery which would have done no discredit to a Lorenzo the Magnificent." 16

Against the discernment of Bicknell's taste, however, William Rossetti put that of those who bought from his sale:

> "The larger prices realised at this sale were almost unexampled; and the run upon such comparatively poor painters as Callcott and Copley Fielding, exceeding the run even upon so great a man as Turner, did not speak highly for the degree of artistic culture which our art-patronizing classes have reached." 17

Without doubt, most women painters of the time would have been classed by Rossetti and his ilk no higher than Callcott or Copley Fielding, and yet their share of the modern Lorenzo's 'Magnificence' consistently occurred at a low level or to a small degree, as the above instances betray. If any women artists were exceptions to that generalisation, they might be Bonheur and Carpenter, but since the latter worked largely in the portrait genre (and when not in simple portraiture, in what would be called the fancy portrait field), her acknowledged skill as a painter did not bring her art into a very highly-esteemed class. In the latter part of the period, however, sales of individuals' collections reveal a slightly higher frequency of female works, with the beneficiaries tending to be the modern generation of female artists, such as Allingham, or Coleman(Angell), although older women seem to have fared better in the latter part of the period as watercolourists, both than they did before and than did their oil-painting contemporaries. 18

This picture of the woman artist being, in general, of very minor interest to the collector, can be seen reflected in the fact that the reasonably successful female artists of the period tended to be represented by one or two works (more often one) in several different collections: not by a few collectors' amassed numbers of their works; thus, the enthusiasm of the patron would seem to be, not for the artist as such, but for a particular work by her. For instance, work by Ward appeared, at one stage or another of her career, in the collections of Bashall (1857: "Market at Antwerp"), Fox (1872: "The Christmas Pudding"), (fig.), Brogden (1878: "The Poet's First Love), Taylor (1883: "The Seige of Lathom House"), Burnand (1871: unidentified work), Holtz (1867: until his sale in 1886: "Palissy the Potter"), (fig. 75), Wallis (1860: "Military Aspirations"); while "The Morning Lesson" went to Grapel in 1860, thence to Bullock to be sold in 1870, (it fetched £84) and "The Tower, ay the Tower' went to Sir W. Call in 1865 for 200 gns., being sold later that same year to Martin for £141, finding its way next into the Wallis collection, from which it was sold in 1871 for 120 gns. (The figures tell their own story). Similarly, the elder Mutrie was represented at various times in the collections of Lee (1855: "Flowers"), Creswick (1855: "Flowers" and 1865: "Orchids, Azaleas and Hyacinths"), Lloyd (1857: "Fruit"), Herbert (1864: "The Opera" and "Flowers"), Burnand (1869: "The Four Seasons"), Egg (1863: "A flower piece"), Bicknell (1863: "Fruit and Flowers on a table"), H. Bicknell (1872: "Flowers"), Pyne (1871: "York and Lancaster" and "The Garden Close"), Schlotel (1875: unidentified work), Ruskin (1869: "Roses and Camellias"). In the same way, Osborn had work in the collections of Chetwynd (1857: "Nameless and Friendless"), (fig. 76), Royal collection (1860: "The Governess" and 1855: "My Cottage Door") [19], Mitchell (1855: "mrs. Sturgis and her children"), (fig. 77), W. Mitchell (1854: "Pickles and Preserves" and 1862: "Tough and Tender"). These artists also had works bought for engraving, on several occasions. [20]

There are, however, infrequent instances of a woman being taken up by a collector in a deliberate and enduring way, though these instances remain slight: the two Mitchell's mentioned above with regard to Osborn, supported her work by purchase and commission for some years - according to James Dafforne in the Art Journal, it was these two brothers "to whose unceasing kindness and generous help she ever expresses the deepest obligation." [21] Collectors of a different sort were Louis Flatou and Ernest Gambart, the former of whom was a patron of Solomon's: when his collection was exhibited in 1859, it included her "The Friend in Need" (fig.78), while her "Inquisitive Page" had been sold from his collection three years earlier, along with her "Win her with gifts if you cannot with words". Gambart consistently supported Bonheur and Henriette Browne, though his attention to home-grown women artists was restricted to the cursory, though useful, attentions he paid Bodichon. Maas says, of Gambart's patronage of Browne, quite simply: "Gambart bought nearly everything she painted." [22] Patronage from the dealer - as opposed to the collector - meant not only a sale for the artist, but exhibition too, since Gambart and Flatou bought for resale, not for retention. The advent of the dealer to the area of patronage was not seen as a thoroughly good thing: the Art Journal very deliberately described Vernon as being "no dealer-buyer, but treated Artists as men (sic) of genius and high feeling, whose productions were not to be 'cheapened'." [23] Speaking here between the lines is a xenophobic note that is not infrequent in British art commentary of the period, as well as a snobbery about art as a commercially-viable commodity that was at odds with the fact of the trading or retailing background of many of the modern race of patrons. For, in reality, an artist whose work was consistently bought and marketed by Gambart or Flatou was not being cheapened but made into a more valuable prospect. The critical prejudice against patrons who bought for commercial reasons and for patrons who bought for aesthetic reasons (if, in truth, any such categorising could confidently be made) was part of an attitude that resisted somewhat the ramifications of the rise to economic power of the

middle-classes, and disliked the idea of art appearing for sale in the high street, so to speak. But, for female artists, the hopes of sale lay more in the high street than in the auction-rooms.

The patrons and collectors that have been mentioned so far have been male. One might well be inspired to look, in tracing the fortunes of women artists, for women buyers, given the growing awareness among middle and upper class women of their sex's position and the ever-increasing discussion of women as wage-earning workers. However, in reality, the matron of the arts was a rare bird indeed. There were few women with individual command of the resources necessary to be a connoisseuse, and the woman who was knowledgeable enough to buy discerningly was, at the beginning of the period, infrequent. Jameson and Eastlake, of course, were to ameliorate that situation both by their work and their example, but the woman's awareness of historical and contemporary art would, by and large, be gained - where it was gained - through the intermediary of a Ruskin, an Art Journal, or a well-meaning husband. The incidence is high, throughout the period, of visual representations of women as observers of art exuding the air of the novice or the uninformed (rather than having the air of the knowing or the expert), (fig.79). The case of Ellen Heaton is to the point here.[24] A Yorkshire woman who inherited great family wealth at the age of 36, in 1852, she was uneducated in the arts except through her acquaintance with artistic people (such as Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, Lord and Lady Pauline Trevelyan, Thomas Richmond the portraitist, and Ruskin) - whose friendship, indeed, she seems to have vigorously cultivated. Ruskin became her great advisor as she adopted the role of matron of art in the 1850's (Virginia Surtees surmises that Heaton first met Ruskin in 1854 or 1855[25]) and therefore, not surprisingly, her purchases over the years (mostly of paintings and drawings) tended to follow the taste of her mentor, and others, to whom he was close and she was, therefore, susceptible. Thus, the principal beneficiaries of her wealth were Turner and D.G.

Rossetti. In a letter of early 1855, Ruskin recommends Siddal as an artist worth patronising, but in the sense that it would be a kindness to buy her work, rather than a sound investment to do so; otherwise, he recommends the male artists of the Preraphaelite circle, specifically Inchbold, Hughes, and Burne-Jones, and, of course, Rossetti.[26] A female artist does not even come to mind (either Heaton's or Ruskin's) when a subject from Elizabeth Barrett Browning is to be treated: Heaton commissioned two such pictures, one even from "Aurora Leigh," but in both cases the chosen painter was Arthur Hughes.[27]

Of less predictable taste - if only because she took more catholic advice on art matters - was the only woman whose position with regard to the buying of art compares with that of any of the collectors already mentioned, Angela Burdett-Coutts; whose ability to be a connoisseuse - that is to say, her money! - was so extraordinary as to remain a point of extreme public interest until she died; her taste, however, or her aesthetic insight, are less bruited about.[28] In the sale of her art collection, which Christie's undertook in early May 1922, out of 305 paintings and drawings, there were five items by women. These were the well-known Kauffmann portrait of Burdett-Coutts and her sisters, a drawing by Annie (Mrs. Anne) Rayner called "The old inn yard" (undated), "The Danish Fisherman's Courtship" (1863) by Elisabeth Jerichau, Rebecca Solomon's "Behind the Curtain" (1858) and a drawing by one Mary Turner of "Foremark Hall" dated 1897. Among the Baroness' other objets d'art, sold on succeeding days, was an engraving by Caroline Watson after Anne Mee and one by the same artist after J. Downman, and a miniature copy of a Raphael madonna by the miniature painter of earlier in the century, Louisa Costello. Not in the sale at her death, but purchased in her lifetime, were other isolated works by female artists: in 1854 she bought a set of four drawings by Mrs. Criddle, "The Seasons", and she commissioned a work from Howitt later that same year. In Howitt's case, it seems that the matron's interest was aroused by "Margaret returning from the Well", but "being too late as a

purchaser for the present effort of the young artist, this lady took care to secure the next work from the same easel by means of a commission." [29]

Patronage was, by and large, such a circumstantial and erratic business for any young artist, But for young female artists, patronage very often started on the friendly or familial level, and did not graduate from thence into a more business-like arrangement, both more reliable and more lucrative. Perhaps this, in fact, was the one form of patronage in which women found more buyers than did men. Certainly, this was the form by which women artists most often benefitted. The inspiration of the buyer in this form of patronage is, strictly speaking, a wish to encourage the artist, rather than a wish to buy the work.

Women were more likely to benefit from this sort of purchasing process because they were seen, by traditionalists, to be fit recipients of this sort of condescension - seen to be in need of it, in the light of the underlying notion of amateurism, which implied that the open market-place was an inappropriate or impossible field for them to compete in. Whereas, it was taken forgranted that the male artist had his sights set on the public arena, and to offer him personal, interested patronage was - after an initial gesture in this direction - unnecessary (because he was succeeding on the open market) or embarassing (because it reflected his failure to succeed on the open market). A female artist would be supposed to be grateful, not embarrassed, by the same gesture made towards her. Yet, such patronage, always being tinged with partiality, could never be as satisfying as finding favour on the open market, and did not bear so much fruit, either in terms of financial reward, increased reputation, or generally acknowledged standing. Thus, for instance, Clayton describes the early efforts of Agnes Bouvier (later Nicholl), who has already been mentioned in these pages:

> "The young artist exhibited for the first time in 1860, at Birmingham - a composition entitled

> 'Sticks for Granny'. This picture gained several commissions for her - one from the Mayor of Birmingham, a great encouragement for her to persevere..." 30

whereas Eleanor Brown's first sale, also according to Clayton, was when "an indulgent grandfather came to the rescue, and bought her first picture." [31] The equivocation felt about interested patronage which is implied by the contrasting tones of these two passages, is made quite explicit, when Clayton writes, of Emma Walter:

> "It has been a matter of just satisfaction to Miss Walter that she has never sold to a friend, therefore she has incurred no obligation to anyone - no-one can say they patronised her through a species of favouritism." 32

The lack of status which sale to friends and family clearly carried with it, meant that an artist could be counted an amateur until she had sold on the open market, and it has been established here that one of the prime concerns of women artists in this period was to combat the stigma of amateurism. Thus it is easy to detect in contemporary accounts, such as Clayton's, an earnest effort on the part of the artist or her apologist to establish that the artist was bought by disinterested parties, and was therefore to be taken seriously. In this vein, Clayton writes later of the Eleanor Brown mentioned above:

> "The productions of this artist have almost invariably obtained commendation from the most severe critics... Of late years her pictures have been so frequently commissions, or purchased while yet on the easel, that her name has not appeared much in the catalogues of exhibitions." 33

Clayton is similarly assertive on behalf of Coleman (Angell):

"From the first, her exquisite groups of flowers attracted attention. Everything she exhibited was sold, and commissions were always

ready for her." [34] Lest one begins to suspect Clayton of an evangelical prejudice in favour of her subjects, Roget confirms what she says, in his later account of the same artist:

> "That the rare quality of Mrs. Angell's work was becoming more and more widely appreciated when her career came thus prematurely to an end, may be inferred from the increasing demand for her drawings, and the high prices they obtained." 35 (Roget refers to her death in 1884 at the age of only 37).

In the light of such thinking, an artist like Bodichon - "Never painted expressly for sale, her pictures have yet sold largely" [36] - who was not in financial need of sales, could be satisfied with the approbation of friends and family, but chose to exhibit publicly and to offer her work for sale and thus vindicate her artistic skills as a talent to be taken seriously; consequently, she could attract a whole column review from the Athenaeum's critic of one of her exhibitions (at the French Gallery, Pall Mall, under Gambart's auspices, in April 1861) which no amateur, as such, would have done. [37]

However, an unequivocal amateur, whose patrons were only and exclusively friends and other interested parties, could still achieve some renown. Margaretta Higford Burr (née Scobell), whose work was more of a holiday pastime than anything else, made drawings for the Arundel Society (fig.80) and was noticed by Waagen in his monumental survey of the arts in England published in 1838. He wrote:

> "I was further agreeably surprised by a considerable collection of large watercolour drawings of much artistic feeling, carefully executed by Mrs. Burr. These comprise the finest and most interesting scenes and buildings in Egypt, Palestine, Asia Minor, Constantinople, Greece, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and England, all drawn from nature." 38

When to this comment,is added Clayton's account of Higford Burr's work -

> "The greatest number of her large collection of her brilliant sketches have been made for her own amusement and the pleasure of her friends, during travels to various parts of the world, in the course of the last twenty-five years. Occasionally she contributes to amateur exhibitions and sales of pictures for charitable purposes" 39

- one has, surely, the very type of the amateur, who never actively sought patronage of any kind, and whose conduct in this respect was not altered by her occasional, almost accidental sale - for her, exceptionally, sales were neither here nor there.

Many women artists fell into this category, but many, it can be suspected, who appeared to do so, nurtured ambitions to be taken more seriously, and had hearts that leapt up at the occasional sale from one or other of the regrettably frequent London charitable shows (regrettable because usually provoked by some disaster). Two artists who were often apparent at such exhibitions, and whose status was amateur, but whose work was widely considered to rank on a par with so-called professional painters, were EVB and Louisa, Lady Waterford. Boyle, who has been mentioned in the foregoing discussion of amateurism (Chapter 1), sold her skills through her drawings being published (fig.81); Waterford tended to give hers away, as gifts to friends or admirers.[40] Although the distinction between amateur and professional was often mooted on grounds of artistic skill, the way in which that evidenced itself was actually through patronage; and many women artists did not receive patronage because patrons did not take them seriously, i.e. considered them amateur. The reasoning is circular: because they were amateurs, their work was not good enough to be bought; because their work was not good enough, it must be amateur.

One cannot accept that talent receives patronage in direct proportion to its degree, given on the one hand the skill of

Waterford (figs. 392/4) or Bodichon (figs. 5/10), and on the other the deficiencies of not a few successful artists; patronage received is surely dependent, to a large degree, on its being asked for: if an artist's work was never exhibited for sale, it never reached prospective patron's eyes: if an artist never presented her work for purchase, it was never thought of an a potential purchase by buyers. Many people around Lady Waterford regretted her self-deprecation in terms which indicated that her amateurism lay rather in the fact that she was thought of as an artist who did not work for sale, than in any estimate of her skills. Rossetti said that she would have been a great artist had she not been aristocratic, and Ruskin reprimanded her that:

> "with your vast influence - you have never led one of us to understand painting better - or reverence it more - or helped our painters to choose a noble instead of an ignoble style - you have been content to have it said in every English drawing room - over the coffee - 'How clever Lady Waterford is!";

William Rossetti, in 1864, writing of the frescoes in the school-room of Ford village which she was commencing, (figs. 82/9) described her as:

> "well known as being, of all our amateur painters, the one most capable of lofty design, composition, and colour - indeed, rivalled in these respects by few of our professional artists"

and Holman Hunt wrote in 1895 that his regret was that she "was so humble in her regard for her designs that she did not take more pains to do them full justice." [41] All of which comments add up to the certainty that her amateur status originated from her low estimation of the low worth of her work, but showed itself in its absence from the public sphere: by not putting her work out for sale, she tacitly declared it not worth buying, which in the contemporary society meant not very good nor serious. Waterford

is the most conspicuous example of women who did not receive patronage because they did not seek it, and whose experience shows patronage to be a key element of the amateur/professional question. Such as she are very different from the majority of women artists failing to find patrons, whose attempt was to find patronage but whose fate, it seems, was rarely to find it.
Mention has already been made of the growing number of women who meant to make a living from their work, and some of them, presumably did manage to do so, but the specific evidence that, say, Mary Harrison did consistently sell her flower paintings, is lacking, although she obviously did sell. Similarly, Clayton reports good or regular sales in the case of not a few of her subjects, while the SFA's shows produced sales of its contributors' work,[42] but specific records of such commercial success do not survive. This confirms the suspicion that female artists who did find patronage, found it in the attentions of clients rather than patrons, buyers rather than collectors (the private collections that the Art Journal profiled in the 1850's rarely included women's work - they were the pride of men who stood half-way between the connoisseur and the client: this latter's purchases would be noticed, if at all, only by inclusion in records of sales.)

If the case of patronage by fellow artists is taken, the generalised explanation of women artists' poor fortune in patronage as a general failure for their work to be highly esteemed, comes into focus. For patronage by one's peers is surely more a question of compliment than of business, showing how highly one's work is respected by people who should know, so to speak. The works of a few women are recurrently found in other artists' collections, but women artists do not seem, by and large, to have commanded the attention from their colleagues that men's work did. The relative absence of women's work from their fellows' collections should be envisaged in its human context, however: the artist, as a social species, was notoriously hard pressed financially, and within the ranks of women artists, even more so; such that women would be widely unable to repay the compliment that a colleague did them of buying a work.[43] An even greater factor, perhaps, was the

absence of women artists from the social arena in which artists came to know and recognise each other as peers. Thus, once more, women's social immobility had a hand in creating and perpetuating their artistic invisibility. Their male colleagues, used (as men generally were and are) to professional matters being conducted man to man, would rather more readily compare themselves to each other, and attend to each other's work as matter for admiration, education or compliment. Again, women themselves might very well have colluded in this, not presuming to see themselves as worthy of their confrères' attentions. When male artists did patronise their female colleaguse, the transaction seems to have been one of friendship or one of a particular work attracting the buyer's attention: in most cases, the patronage was occasional, not to say unique. An example of the friendly sort of exchange would be where William Bell Scott bought two watercolours from Bodichon - they were both in the Rossetti circle.[44] An instance of the appeal of a work incurring a sale would be all those pieces by the Mutrie sisters which were acquired by other artists (none of whom seems to have been particular friends of the two women): this includes Augustus Egg's "A flowerpiece", Thomas Creswick's "Flowers" and "Orchids, Azaleas and Hyacinths", J.B. Pyne's "York and Lancaster" and "The Garden Close".[45] Louisa Starr Canziani received commissions from G.F. Watts, in a spirit of patronage encouraging an artist whose work is generally admired by the commissioner.[46] David Roberts bought Blunden's "God's Gothic" from the 1859 Academy exhibition. (Ruskin's response was that Roberts "might learn something by that picture, if he would but study it.")[47]

Though women's work was receiving more praise as the period went on, and markedly more attention, that praise seems not to have matured into the wish and will to acquire a work from the admired artist(s). Women artists, themselves, seem not from the available evidence to have expressed their awareness of this being the unfortunate case, by deliberately matronising other women in the profession, although many were quite apparently intellectually

supportive of their sex's struggle to win an equal footing in the art-world. In the writing of Jopling, Thompson, or Ward, one finds compliments paid to their consoeurs, but never a recorded instance of money paid to their sisters; or, even, of an exchange of works with another woman artist. An exception in this general trend, however, is Bodichon, who commissioned her portrait from Fox (it was shown at the RA in 1868) and later from Osborn (1883/4) (fig. 90) as well.[48] The mutual recognition of such a transaction crops up in other isolated instances: Carpenter painted the portrait of the sculptor Susan Durant (exhibited at the Academy in 1860); Bartholomew painted Anna Fitzjames' portrait in 1852; Fanny Corbaux's portrait was painted by Julia Goodman in 1884; Eliza Smallbone Melville painted the sculptor Mary Thornycroft in 1862.[49] Without knowing the particular history of these works, it is impossible to know whether they were actual commissions or, rather, favours, or even expressions of heroine-worship; without having seen these works, it is impossible to know what sort of statements they make about the relationship between the two artists involved. The Osborn of Bodichon, however, is quite accessible on these counts. The Magazine of Art reported in December 1883:

> "Miss.E.M. Osborn has nearly completed a life-sized portrait of Mme. Bodichon for the hall of Girton College, Cambridge. The portrait is presented by the sitter's friends, in grateful recognition of her efforts in the cause of the higher education of women." 50

Although the sitter is thus identified as a feminist rather than an artist, the work in fact represents her as the latter. On the picture's exhibition, an American commentator wrote:

> "Miss Osborn... sent a life-size portrait of 'Madame Bodichon', the wife of Dr. Eugène Bodichon, of Algiers. Madame Bodichon, herself a landscape artist of considerable repute, is best known in England by her philanthropic work in connection with the education of women, and as one of the founders of Girton College at Cambridge.

> Miss Osborne depicts her friend at work in her country home at Hastings, in Sussex." 51

Bodichon did not return the compliment, being a landscapist.

Artist/artist patronage exhibits some similar characteristics to that much more public form of commercial success, royal patronage. They are both modes of appreciation traditionally most fruitful and satisfying to the artist, though they indicate very different levels of approbation. The artist's artist was unlikely to be the monarch's favourite also, and those artists smiled upon by the crown were very probably unpopular with many of their peers. As far as women were concerned, however, there seems to have been a similar amount of acknowledgement offered in both spheres. Perhaps what the crown and the artistic community had in common in the mid-Victorian era was a belief in the prejudice that women's pictures and statues were less interesting and valuable because they were made by women. Be that as it may, it is still the case that Royal patronage in England found a place for women artists, albeit a very circumscribed one. Victoria's known views on sexual politics, combined with the fact that she, and other female members of her family and entourage, dabbled in art, would be enough to predict that the royal couple would not readily see women artists as serious, professional, employable practitioners.[52]

By and large, the situation for women artists in both Royal and state patronage seems to have been that they might be called upon for personal, domestic or small-scale work, but that they simply did not enter into the question when it was a matter of public, large or heroic work - a clear case of sex stereotyping, although this division of labour, which is obvious when the whole scene is looked at, was not articulated in individual instances. It is difficult to distinguish altogether between Royal and state patronage in the early part of Victoria's reign, given Prince Albert's resolute participation in cultural policy and given the rise of the artist-administrator like Charles Eastlake and Henry Cole. However, it is clear that Victoria and Albert acted patronally.

both as individuals and as heads of state, and it is clear too that, although in the latter guise their patronage and that of government tend to cleave together as one, the government also existed as a patron independent of royalty. So, three categories of patronage by the leaders of the nation could be posited: Victoria (and her family) as individual patrons; state patronage; government patronage (local and national).

To look at Royal taste first: Winslow Ames suggests its relationship to popular opinion thus:

> "If the court taste at the beginning of the Queen's reign was ten years or more behind the times, it was by the end of 1861 sufficiently caught up with general taste in most respects to provoke reaction not only from Punch but from such conscious tastemaking quarters as Ruskin's; and in other respects... it was in the lead. It was, then, a positive taste, perhaps most in the lead where least consciously so. It should always be borne in mind, however, that Prince Albert's taste was generally that of the just populariser, not that of the man of flair or the uninhibited inventor." 53

Ames takes the point of view that Albert's was the predominant artistic sense, and dismisses Victoria's aesthetic policies with such observations as the following:

> "It would be fair to say that Queen Victoria was a consumer, better able than most to command what she wanted"...
> "The Princess was, I think, primarily an auditory receptor... her visual taste was rather uncritical: what she really liked was what was new and modish..."
> "Her taste was always for intrinsic value and for personal associations." 54

If these characteristics of her patronal rationale are justified, they reflect how typical in many ways she was of her sex and time, and the spirit of willing submission in which Victoria seems to have taken Albert's aesthetic preferences for her own, has been

captured by some later writers in a truly Victorian tone of patriarchy: "(Victoria) was, undoubtedly, in love with him from the beginning, but it took some years for him to establish complete dominance over her mind; and, incidentally, over her unformed artistic taste." [55] Within her own time, commentators described Albert's aesthetic ascendancy over the Queen in identical terms:

> "... the Queen had in Prince Albert a husband whose carefully trained artistic taste moulded and strengthened her own. Henceforth she was guided by his judgment in her patronage of painters, encouraged by his enthusiasm in her love of the limner's craft, by his praise in her own practice of it... As patrons and lovers of the brush the names of these illustrious personages will always be commingled." 56

Victoria and Albert - it is no distortion of the truth of their relationship to talk of them as a double-act [57] - rarely bought work from women artists, but did more frequently commission it. Ames, again, perhaps echoes contemporary judgment when he writes (with what is, for a modern writer, appallingly prejudiced generalisation): "Her ... late acquisitions were seldom distinguished (they included some work by women artists)..." [58]; and the same could be said of her early patronage, too - there were no women painters among her consistent favourites, which were characterised by both the best and the worst characteristics of Victorian painting, including as they did Edwin Landseer, E.M. Ward, and William Frith; the only woman to receive conspicuous attention from the Royal matron of the arts was a sculptor, Mary Thornycroft. It was only with her importunate purchase of Thompson's "Roll Call" (fig.35) of 1874 [59], that Victoria bought what Ames might agree to call a 'distinguished' work from a woman's hand. Otherwise, she had acquired Osborn's "My Cottage Door" from the 1855 RA exhibition, and the same painter's "The Governess" of 1860 ("The Queen showed her high appreciation of the work by becoming its purchaser")[60]; two pieces of Maria Harrison's flower and fruit; Jerichau's "A Norwegian Widow". Female artists favoured

rather by Albert than by the Queen included Emma Gagiotti Richards, whose tondi "Faith", "Hope" and "Charity" at Osborne seem to reflect a choice more in keeping with the Consort's than with the Monarch's taste, insofar as they are distinguishable.[61]

A form of patronage which benefited some women painters, which was peculiarly a royal patronage, was the concept of the court appointment. Traditionally, the Monarch's household - and the household of other members of the royal family - included retainers who could service their employer in specialised ways. Thus, various manufacturers and craftspeople could be appointed to his or her Majesty, and derive not only work but prestige therefrom. The number of appointments would depend, obviously, on royal coffers and the imagined needs or desires of the head of the household. For instance, in George 3's reign, it was not unknown for the appointments under the heading "ARTISTS" to run, in themselves, to over 20, including such particularised skills asTopographer, Printseller, Historical Engraver in imitation of chalk drawings, Landscape Painter in crayons. The significance of this form of patronage for the artist who was appointed is described by Oliver Millar as follows:

> "... the appointments of artists of various kinds to positions in royal households would have been made by the Lord Chamberlain of the household concerned. The basis would have been a liking for the artist's work but they did not necessarily mean continuous employment by the royal patron." 62

A number of women found themselves honoured in this way, some on their own merits, others benefitting from the family connection, a relative being already under the royal aegis. An example of this latter case, it would seem, was Magdalene Ross (later Mrs. Edwin Dalton) who was appointed Miniature Painter to the Queen in 1850: she was the sister of Sir William Ross, who had been a miniature painter to the royal family for at least ten years before that; sometimes, Magdalene Ross' artistic tasks consisted

of copying her brother's work (one finds no instances of this relation being reversed). Other miniature-painting women to receive court appointments were Maria Ann Chalon, otherwise Mrs. Henry Moseley, appointed Portrait Paintress to the Duke of York in the 1820's (and whose work, incidentally, is sometimes said to resemble that of Sir William Ross); and Emma Kendrick, Miniature Painter in Ordinary to the King from 1830.[63]

Apart from miniature painting, other painting tasks for which women were appointed were equally 'appropriate' to their sex: Ambrosini Jérôme was made Portrait Painter to the Duchess of Kent; Mrs. Dighton, née Macintyre, was Fruit and Flower Painter to the Queen from 1830; Mélanie de Comoléra had the same post under Queen Adelaide; Coleman (Angell) was the Queen's Flower Painter in Ordinary from 1879.[64] These positions, though, no doubt, conferring publicly recognised status and being used as claims to recognition by the artists themselves, should be seen rather, perhaps, as gestures of private patronage on their bestowers' part than as state patronage, especially where the bestower was of lower status than Albert or Victoria. Such titles signified a certain amount of assured work, but, for the woman who did not receive this assurance, the most likely expectation of royal patronage she could entertain was the occasional or angled-for commission or purchase, a portrait, a watercolour landscape, or a copy.

Such is the case with Elizabeth Murray, who established a reputation as an interesting and gifted, if undisciplined water-colourist, rising through the exhibitions of the SFA to become one of the highlights of NI and New Watercolour shows.[65] She was the daughter of Thomas Heaphy, an artist who had served the king in his own day, and who had encouraged his daughter enough for her to have gained some name for herself at the time of his death in 1835 (when she was 20).

> "About that time", reports Clayton, "Queen Adelaide gave her some commissions, to

of copying her brother's work (one finds no instances of this relation being reversed). Other miniature-painting women to receive court appointments were Maria Ann Chalon, otherwise Mrs. Henry Moseley, appointed Portrait Paintress to the Duke of York in the 1820's (and whose work, incidentally, is sometimes said to resemble that of Sir William Ross); and Emma Kendrick, Miniature Painter in Ordinary to the King from 1830.[63]

Apart from miniature painting, other painting tasks for which women were appointed were equally 'appropriate' to their sex: Ambrosini Jérôme was made Portrait Painter to the Duchess of Kent; Mrs. Dighton, née Macintyre, was Fruit and Flower Painter to the Queen from 1830; Mélanie de Comoléra had the same post under Queen Adelaide; Coleman (Angell) was the Queen's Flower Painter in Ordinary from 1879.[64] These positions, though, no doubt, conferring publicly recognised status and being used as claims to recognition by the artists themselves, should be seen rather, perhaps, as gestures of private patronage on their bestowers' part than as state patronage, especially where the bestower was of lower status than Albert or Victoria. Such titles signified a certain amount of assured work, but, for the woman who did not receive this assurance, the most likely expectation of royal patronage she could entertain was the occasional or angled-for commission or purchase, a portrait, a watercolour landscape, or a copy.

Such is the case with Elizabeth Murray, who established a reputation as an interesting and gifted, if undisciplined water-colourist, rising through the exhibitions of the SFA to become one of the highlights of NI and New Watercolour shows.[65] She was the daughter of Thomas Heaphy, an artist who had served the king in his own day, and who had encouraged his daughter enough for her to have gained some name for herself at the time of his death in 1835 (when she was 20).

> "About that time", reports Clayton, "Queen Adelaide gave her some commissions, to

> execute which she left England for Malta, provided with letters of introduction to influential persons... In Turkey she was the guest of Sir Stratford Canning and his wife, afterwards Lord and Lady Stratford de Redcliffe, remaining for some time, in order to paint the beauties of the harem. Also she made sketches in the slave markets, and painted portraits of the various members of the foreign embassies. From Turkey she went to Greece, where she was the guest of the late king, and queen, and painted several portraits of them for their respective families." 66

In conclusion, Clayton declares that some of the artist's best works

> "were purchased by the late Marquis Lansdowne, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the late Marquis of Northampton, and other eminent collectors in England, and also in America. Among her finest portraits is a full-length of the Duke of Cambridge; another of Prince Demidoff; the King and Queen of Greece; Garibaldi, who is a personal friend..."

The delight which Clayton - and, no doubt, her readers - takes here in royal name-dropping indicates the premium which was put on royal patronage, at least by some, but obscures the fact that the work cited as commissioned by Murray's royal and aristocratic patrons was, by and large, atypical of her exhibited work (representative titles of this being "Beggars at a church door in Rome" (1859) (fig.94), "Two little Monkeys" (1861) (fig.95), "Pfifferari playing to the Virgin, a scene in Rome" (1859) (fig. 96), or "Spanish Milk Stall" (1867)). 67

A similar path to that taken by Murray was followed by Mary Severn (later Newton), who, however, did not complement her work in the aristocratic sphere with widespread exhibition in more proletarian circles, deriving nearly all her work from personal connections within the British upper-class network which worked so well for Murray. (Severn did, however, die unexpectedly and

early, at a time when she had begun to show her work more widely on the London circuit, and had been well-received there.) [68]
Severn, like Murray, was the daughter of a painter - Joseph Severn - and first entered artistic circles through being trained by George Richmond, himself an artist patronised by the upper classes.
Severn's first royal commission came about through her being known to Lady Augusta Bruce, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, and it was for a portrait drawing of the Prince Imperial. This was followed by a commission to draw the Queen Mother, the Duchess of Kent, and the Prince of Wales, and Princess Beatrice. In a letter written at this time, the artist said to her mother:

> "... whatever I do, don't you think I am right to do all to please the Queen, and also to do a <u>good</u> portrait of this Baby? and Lady Augusta said it would lead to my doing the other children." 69

A comment made at the same time by a third party, the Severn's family friend Arthur Murray, bears on this episode rather quaintly:

> "Her drawings, especially her portraits, in pencil and watercolour, are charming. She painted the Duchess of Kent and the younger Princesses: and the Queen would sit by her for hours looking on, or go and fetch clean water for her colours, in a most simple and kindly way." 70

This work, for the Royal Family, was done between 1853 and 1858; her ceasing to work for Royal Patrons was not due to her falling out of favour - the traditional hazard of royal patronage - but rather due to her connection with and later marriage to, Charles Newton, whose influence effectively ended her career as an original artist and reduced her to an antique copyist (as which, albeit, she was very successful) (fig. 20):

> "Newton was trying to find someone to make drawings of the marbles for his lectures, said Mr. Vaux, and he had wondered whether to suggest Mary's name. Mary was full of enthusiasm. She had felt she was getting a little stale in her work lately. Since

finishing her portraits of the older Princesses, she had exhibited several pictures at the Academy and had plenty of commissions, but somehow she felt dissatisfied and restless. It would be something quite new, and she would learn a great deal about Greek art..." 71

which she did, but at considerable loss to her own art: the Illustrated London News obituary of her identified her as "Mrs. Charles Newton, wife of the distinguished superintendent of the Greek and Roman antiquities of the British Museum", and although describing her as "one of the most gifted and promising of our female artists", referred to her work thus:

> "Mrs. Newton executed a number of drawings from the sculptures discovered by her husband at Budrum and Caidos, and from the finest antique sculptures and vase paintings of the Museum as illustrations of Mr. Newton's lectures." 72

Given the family ties that existed during Victoria's reign throughout the crowned and to-be-crowned heads of Europe, it is not surprising to see an artist being passed from hand to hand, as it were, as Clayton implied in Murray's case and as occurred on a local level, so to speak, in Severn's. For a woman, this serving many masters was notable, given that travelling freely was not easy for females, and given that many women would have lacked the experience and education which provided the social skills necessary to impress in such high places. Those women who did succeed with foreign, as well as domestic, royalty, were thrown into the cosmopolitan stream and struggled with the tides of language, propriety, and diplomacy as best they could. More often than not, it seems, family connections were their anchor: usually the line went through a father or husband. Elizabeth Murray, once out in the mainstream of European nobility, remained abroad through marriage to a diplomat who was British Consul in Gibraltar and later Tenerife; Elisabeth Baumann (better known later as Jerichau) was born in Warsaw, married a Russian, subsequently

went with him to Germany and them to Rome, where she married a Dane (the sculptor Jerichau), with whom she eventually settled in Copenhagen, achieving a truly cosmopolitan existence, on which Clayton reports thus:

> "she has had the honour of painting several very successful portraits of various Royal personages - the Princess of Wales, who is an old friend of hers, the Prince Albert Victor, the late King of Denmark, the Queen Dowager of Denmark, the present Queen Louise of Denmark, the King and Queen of Greece, the eldest son of the Grand Duchess Marie, etc... At Athens, in 1870, she was the guest of the King and Queen of Greece, when she was asked to paint their Majesties and the Royal children... Mme. Jerichau has had the honour to paint pictures and portraits for nearly every sovereign in Europe." 73

It will be remembered that Victoria had a picture by this artist, in her collection, and Burdett-Coutts another. Although evidently not British, Jerichau was very well known in this country in the 1860's and '70's, and in 1870, a critic in the Illustrated London News could write that the artist "has been too well known to the English public for some years to require any other introduction than her work." [74]

From the foregoing, it will be seen, as was claimed, that where women were patronised royally it was for 'women's art': it is not surprising to see portraiture predominant in court circles, and portraiture - especially when it was of women or children - was deemed to a large extent feminine, and therefore permissible ground for women to work; the miniature portrait combined delicacy of touch and smallness of scale to make it, also, legitimate ground for female artists to practise upon; flower-painting, too, was womanly enough for female practitioners to be called in to work upon it. Insofar as it was these traditionally feminine qualities which the Victorian court endorsed in women's art, it is not surprising that hardly any female sculptors were favoured by the crown (the few who were, will be discussed below), and

that those female painters whose relations with royalty are easiest to identify are such as Annie Dixon, Norfolk-born miniature painter, noted especially for her women and children, (fig.97). The combined royal emphasis on face-painting and traditional gender roles, could mean that the royal commissions received by a woman would thus not necessarily exploit her best talents nor invoke her principal interests. Annie Dixon's "Princess of Wales" (1864), for instance, was declared by the Illustrated London News critic to be "perhaps her least successful work." [75] Ward, who became known for her historical drama pictures, was commissioned by the Queen to portray, not some past English heroine, but the Royal infants in their domestic setting. Admittedly, at the time when Victoria came across the artist she had not yet exhibited her strongest historical works, and had shown scenes of domestic sentiment at the London exhibitions which had been praised, but it is reflective of the restricted view which the Royal patron exercised that Victoria failed to appreciate and encourage Ward's potential and, later, development beyond the stereotypical limits. Ward, herself, recalls the Queen's first noticing her:

> "I had painted several portraits of my children, and on the occasion of one of her visits to our house, 11 Upton Park, in October 1857, Queen Victoria expressed her pleasure at these pictures, and it led to some important commissions." 76

It is not quite beside the point, that it was on the artist's husband's business that Victoria was visiting their home: E.M. Ward was one of the painters executing frescoes for the new Houses of Parliament, and both Victoria and Albert, it seems, made it their business to show a personal interest in the progress that this work made; it was thus in the domestic role of wife and mother that the Queen first perceived Henrietta Ward, and this is the identity reflected in the commissions the artist received from the Queen. Reflected, not only in the nature of the pictures commissioned, but in the fact that Ward was teacher to the Duchess

of Albany and Princess Alice, when they were still young, and it is evident that this was a pseudo-maternal relationship: the artist's own words indicate this:

> "During the two years I went to Claremont, Esher, the Duchess of Albany's residence, to give her lessons in painting, she made rapid progress, and only abandoned her studies on account of numerous public engagements. Her daughter, the Princess Alice, came to my studio with her governess for four years. She was clever and industrious, and possessed such a sunshiny nature as to win my heart entirely. (fig.98) When she came for the first time, she was the prettiest little girl imaginable, with golden hair and blue eyes, a veritable fairy princess... During the intervals between teaching, my daughters often amused Princess Alice, and one day I found Enid and the little Princess on the ground watching the slow antics of our dear old tortoise, and to please the Princess Enid had placed a toy one beside it, to see if he would recognise his counterfeit brother..." 77

To complete the character of the teacher-pupil relationship as a mother-daughter one, the artist also taught each of her own daughters to paint. This is not to belittle the regard which these royal favours indicate for Ward as an artist: when, in later life, as has been described, she set up a school for teaching girls art, she secured the endorsement of the Royal family for the venture in no uncertain terms: as patrons she could claim the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, Princess Louise, and the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh.[78] The artist's painting was essentially concerned with royalty and the noble, many of Ward's pictures featuring Victoria's predecessors, and one might see in the dramatis personae of her succeeding Academy exhibits ample advertisement of her sympathy with Royalty; it seems typical of the patronal situation of women aritsts in this period, that the Queen did not, say, buy "Lady Jane Grey refusing the Crown of England" (fig.15) and did not, say, commission "The Tower, ay the Tower", but instead had Ward painting the cherubic

faces of the royal infants. (Interestingly, it was one of the artist's less patrician subjects which she dedicated to the Queen, in 1876, "Elizabeth Fry visiting Newgate") (fig. 99).

Royal patronage for women who sculpted showed the same general attitude discussed above with regard to female painters: it tended to ask for portraiture, female and infantile, on a small scale, resulting in works that were domestic or even intimate. Sculpture, obviously, however, brings slightly different questions to bear, by its very nature. The cases of two artists can be fruitfully examined here: those of Susan Durant and Mary Thornycroft.

At Windsor is a series of portrait medallions, sculpted in relief as part of the interior decoration of the Albert Memorial Chapel, of members of the Royal family, (fig. 100), by Durant. These portraits were executed in 1868/9, not the first Royal commission she had received. In 1865, the Queen's uncle Leopold, king of the Belgians, died and Durant made a recumbent white marble effigy of the late monarch for St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, which statue was completed in 1867. It was removed from the Chapel in 1879, in deference to a Boehm figure of the same person, and is now in Christ Church, Esher Green. If the Art Journal's obituarist is to be believed, this had come about thus: "An introduction to the Queen, a few years ago, procured for her many commissions, and she had a royal pupil in the Princess Louise." [79] Apart from the work already mentioned, the "many commissions" included a bust of the Queen made in 1872 for the Middle Temple, and portrait medallions of the Queen and Consort executed in 1866 and 1860 respectively, and still at Windsor Castle. Gunnis' dictionary describes Durant as "one of Queen Victoria's favourite sculptors", which is true, but this was surely not a very momentous position to hold, since the Queen was not very interested in sculpture (for her own use), finding it much less appealing than painting. Anyway, when one looks a little closer, the surface of this statement is broken in a number of ways.

Correspondence in the Royal Archives concerning Durant's work at Windsor reveals that, at the time of the Leopold monument commission, Baron Triqueti was also working on a royal commission in the Wolsey Chapel, which, since he had been Durant's teacher, suggests that she may have got her commission through him.[80] The same source indicates the difficulties a woman (perhaps, especially, a young woman) had with the etiquette of her position: she wrote to the Dean of Windsor on 14th November 1867, inquiring:

> "I should be much obliged by your informing me if I am to communicate with Mr. Poole about the execution of the canopy or whether I am to refer him to Mr. Thomas Biddulph, or to Mr. George (?) for further orders...",

to which the Dean replied to Biddulph: "Pray give her an answer (?) Mr. Poole - for the woman plagues my life out".

The sense in which the Queen ordered sculpture by the cubic foot, as she might order painting by the yard, is indicated by a submission made by Durant in July 1867 for payment, not only for the Leopold statue, but for "work executed from September 1866 to July 1867", which list also includes "Medallion of HRH the Princess of Wales", "Various medals.. of HM the Queen and the Prince Consort", "Casts for HRH the Princess Louise of Lady Churchill's medallion"; a letter of 28th January 1868 puts forward a further account:

> "I take this opportunity of enclosing an account of work which I have had the honour to execute since last July by command of her Majesty with another of various commissions entrusted to me by HRH the Princess Louise."

Yet further, the reality of being "one of Queen Victoria's favourite sculptors" comes to bleak light, not only in her matron's lacklustre comments on the work -

"After luncheon, went to look at Miss Durant's model for the monument of dearest Uncle Leopold. - Resting, then saw Mr. Helps, about the precious Life of my beloved Albert... (April 16, 1866)
... After 5 drove with Louise and Arthur to St. George's Chapel to see the monument to beloved Uncle Leopold, which Miss Durant has done for me, and which is to be placed not far from Princess Charlotte's. The likeness is remarkably good. Then we went to the Riding School... (July 12, 1867) 81

- but in the press critiques which her work received -

"We cannot congratulate Miss Durant on having triumphed over the difficulties of portraiture in relief in her series of the Royal Family, excellent as the likenesses may be"...
"The painstaking and highly elaborated medallions, also in alto relievo, by Miss Durant, we cannot approve. The artist has evidently worked conscientiously, and it is all the more to be regretted that good intention has not been guided by correct principles." 82

Jostling for claim to the title that Gunnis gives Durant, anyway, must be Mary Thornycroft née Francis, in whom Victoria and Albert showed a more prolonged interest (Thornycroft, unlike Durant, lived a long working life. 83) Both these artists commanded critical attention (if not always critical respect): not least, one suspects, because of the novelty of a woman working efficiently in the media of marble and stone. The Royal attention they received limelighted their novelty: thus the Illustrated London News on the artist's 1862 bust of Princess Alice (fig.101):

"Mrs. Thornycroft has attained eminence in an art which, if not more difficult than painting, is certainly one in which her sex has hitherto much more rarely excelled. We know of only one other instance in which a lady has achieved a high reputation in this most elevated and refined form of art. We allude to the American lady, Miss Hosmer..." 84

and thus the Art Journal on Thornycroft's 1860 model of Princess Beatrice, "The Cradle" (fig. 102):

> "Female painters have been, and are, in abundance - female sculptors are rarae aves; for the chisel and the mallet require stronger hands than the pencil and palette... We cannot but admire the spirit which urges the gentler sex to the execution of Art-works so foreign, as it would seem, to their nature..." 85

Thornycroft seems to have had enough conviction artistically to vindicate the Royal patronage she received as more than attentions paid to a freak of nature, however: the Art Journal observed in 1864:

> "There is not, we believe, such an official in the Lord Chamberlain's department of the royal household as that of "Sculptor to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty"; if there were, Mrs. Thornycroft would undoubtedly be in possession of "Letters patent" confirmatory of such appointment. But although the lady bears not this honourable title, she certainly enjoys all its privileges, inasmuch as the largest portion of the private patronage of royalty seems to fall to her share..." 86

All of Thornycroft's royal work was in portrait form, though this included some allegorical or fancy portraiture (as in "Plenty: Princess Louise" (fig. 103) and "Peace: Princess Helena" (fig. 104) of 1861); they were usually in marble and almost invariably free-standing, not life-size. The subjects given to her to portray were exclusively female or infantine, and her busiest period in royal service was the decade of the 1860's. Her initial apprenticeship to the crown came about by a circuitous route, dependent on the by now familiar circumstance of the male connection:

> "The first work which Mrs. Thornycroft exhibited under her married name was a

bust of John Lander, the African traveller, but it was her model of "A sleeping Child" which impressed John Gibson. Indeed, he was so much struck by it, that when Queen Victoria asked him to suggest a suitable sculptor to model portraits of her children he at once recommended Mary Thornycroft." 87

F.G. Stephens, in his obituary article for the Art Journal on the sculptor, suggests further ramifications to the circumstance, however:

> "consulted by Her Majesty about a sculptor who could execute portraits in marble of some of the royal children, the author of "The tinted Venus" warmly recommended Mrs. Thornycroft as one who was better qualified for such tasks than himself. It was fortunate that about a year before his daughter's marriage (c.1839), John Francis had executed a bust of the Queen which must have served as a sort of secondary introduction to the royal favour". 88

Without meaning to cast aspersions on Gibson's gesture, one wonders if there does not lurk here the shadow of the busy artist pleased to shrug off an unwelcome proposition (from a party he would have been loathe to displease) onto a younger worker who would know no way to refuse, and would not, in fact, wish to do so. This interpretation is confirmed by the artist's grand-daughter's account of this incident, in her biography of the artist and her husband Thomas:

> "The Queen had desired to have sculptured portraits made of the Royal children, and offered this commission to Gibson, who at once recommended that it should be given to Mrs. Thornycroft, saying that he considered her better able to execute the work than himself." 89

Stephens suggests that this first royal commission was of seminal importance, that "it directed her after-path in art, decided that her vocation was juvenile portraiture, and confirmed her claims

to be a proficient mistress of the poetry of youth." [90] She was, indeed, most often called upon by her royal matron to portray the youngest members of the family, making occasional forays into the world of young adulthood (e.g. Princess Alexandra (fig.105) (1863), Princess Alice (fig. 101) (1862), the Princess Royal (fig. 106) (1858)). [91] In her non-commissioned work, she kept to the same sort of sitters, (fig.107) so that Stephens's interpretation of the royal patronage suiting the inclinations of the artist seems to be a valid one. There is, however, a strong taste of the sexual division of labour here, given that while Mary Thornycroft was deployed on royal children and beauties, her husband Thomas received commissions to portray royal heroes. There is no doubt, however, that she was considered to be good at what she did, and the tendency to do what one does well, rather than risk oneself on unfamiliar or untried (and, as it would have been thought, inappropriate) ground, needs no explaining away. Even so, the artist was capable of less feminine work: she completed her husband's Boadicea group on the Embankment (figs. 108/9) left unfinished at this death in 1885; he and she had jointly produced "Alfred the Great and his Mother", (fig.110), for the Great Exhibition of 1851; and she made the statues of James 1 and Charles 1 of the portrait effigies of British monarchs in the Palace of Westminster (1863). [92] The artist's grand-daughter describes the extent of the artist's work for the court as "a stream of Royal commissions", and writes:

> "During the next sixteen years (after 1846) it became the artist's boast that she had made portraits of four generations of the Royal Family, from the aged Duchess of Gloucester, daughter of George 3, to the Princess Louise of Hesse, grand-daughter of Queen Victoria. She worked constantly at Windsor; and in time the drawing-room at Osborne was adorned with portraits by her of all the Queen's children." 93

In similar vein, the Illustrated London News, reporting in 1863 on Thornycroft's bust of Princess Alexandra, simply declared that "Mrs. Thornycroft and her gifted husband have executed statues

and busts of the whole Royal family". [94]

Thornycroft's success came with her patronage by Royalty: engravings of her portraits of princes, princesses, duchesses, etc., frequently adorned the pages of the Art Journal and the Illustrated London News, and the same commissioned works were shown at the Academy and other London exhibitions from 1835 to 1877. [95] This borrowed prestige, whereby the artist is considered as good as her patron, should not, however, obscure Thornycroft's artistic merits. Although reviewers pointed out her tendency to repeat herself, both in terms of concept and insofar as she would make several versions of the same work, critical acknowledgement of her skills was never slow to come. Of her bust of the Princess Royal (1858) (fig.106), the Illustrated London News critic said:

> "Like all Mrs. Thornycroft's work of this class, the peculiar merit of this work is its obvious truthfulness; the genuine character of the original being thrown into it without attempt at idealisation or qualification of any sort. But, at the same time, whilst this great essential of truthfulness is adhered to, the refined sentiment and dignity of character appropriate to the subject are admirably preserved." 96

F.G. Stephens, in the obituary article already quoted, gave a more discerning assessment of the artist's skills, implying the limited nature of the genre in which she practised, defining her as one of the class of sculptors who "approved types less stringent, and modes of execution less searching, than the more ambitious sculptors of that day" [97]; here is a hint of the limitations imposed by consistent patronage which makes the same constant demand on the artist over the years, not encouraging much experimentation but simply securing the goods, so to speak.

Thornycroft's receipt of royal patronage was well-documented, in the press and later by her grand-daughter's biography, "Bronze

and Steel", but there were other female sculptors whose brush with the royal patrons was much more brief and less celebrated, and therefore is more difficult to note: cursory mention can be made here, however, of Caroline Fellowes, a portrait sculptor whose medallion of Prince Albert as a child (fig.111) was commissioned in marble by the Queen after the artist's first voluntary treatment of the subject, in 1871; and of Mary Grant, who was equally a figural and a portrait sculptor, whose royal work included a portrait of the Queen and a relief of Dean Stanley in the Royal Chapel at Windsor.[98]

When Victoria and Albert are considered as leaders of the state, advising, influencing or even pressurising governmental decision-makers, rather than as private patrons, they are seen to be less kind to women artists. Very few public commissions were awarded to female sculptors or painters, and a recurrent pattern shows itself, whereby a woman who received personal commissions from the Queen and Consort found her husband, brother, father or son being commissioned to make public works for the royal couple. That is to say, the absence of women's work from the public place is not to be seen as women being perceived as less talented than men, but being perceived as talented in a different way. Hence, the positions of the Ward couple and the Thornycroft couple already referred to in passing: E.M. Ward was commissioned to decorate the new Palace of Westminster in fresco, Henrietta Ward was commissioned to portray the royal children; "Mr. Thornycroft is about to execute a statue of the late Prince Consort for Wolverhampton... Mrs. Thornycroft has received the Queen's command to execute a bust of Princess Alexandra."[99] If Durant is recalled, however, her position as an unmarried woman with neither famous artistic father nor brother, is different: she was one of nine artists chosen for the Mansion House commissions in 1863, the only female artist among the nine.[100] Though Victoria and Albert may have had no hand in this decision, the commissioners being the Corporation of London, their subsequent patronage of the artist links them with it.

Durant's piece was "The Faithful Shepherdess" or "The Gentle Shepherdess", on which William Rossetti wrote in the Fine Arts Quarterly at the time of the exhibition of several of the commissioned works:

> "It is gratifying to find that a lady professing the arduous art of sculpture receives recognition such as this commission implies; still more gratifying to note that her statue contrasts more triumphantly than favourably with the work of such a male competitor as Mr. Westmacott" (J.S. Westmacott had made a statue of "Alexander the Great"). 101

On this same occasion, a writer in the Illustrated London News observed that Durant's piece represented the first important public sculptural commission of a female artist that could be called to mind. [102] The Corporations of other towns and cities were presumably somewhat freer than London to make their own choices of artists, being less under the paternal eye of Parliament and the court which might wish to curb provincial avant-gardism, yet the only striking contradiction to the example set by Victoria and Albert of men for the world and women for the home, was the example set by Edinburgh in 1869, of commissioning Amelia Paton (Hill, by marriage to the photographer) to sculpt "David Livingstone" (fig. 112) for the Prince's Gardens in that city. The statue was unveiled in 1876 and in 1902 was recollected by William Sharp as "the first work of sculpture done by a woman which has been erected in any public place in Britain": [103] even then, he had no further instances to add to it.

A few examples can be found somewhat later in the century of publicly-placed sculptural work by women, but these are not examples of public patronage: for instance, the bust of Richard Burchett (fig. 113) by Henrietta Montalba in the Royal College of Art (188?), and Mary Grant's head of Henry Fawcett in the drinking fountain memorial to him on Victoria Embankment (1886) (figs. 114/5)erected by "his countrywomen". Within the period

here under discussion, however, the most conspicuous success in public sculptural work gained by a woman was achieved by the American Harriet Hosmer. She was, even so, a very visible example in this country. Like Thornycroft, she served her apprenticeship with John Gibson (much more completely so than Thornycroft, in fact) in Rome, and her early works reflect the cultural stimulus of the land of classicism, (fig. 116) but her native country patronised her well in latter years: her public commissions included the Freedmen's Monument to Abraham Lincoln in Washington (1868) (fig. 117) and the statue of Thomas Hart Benton in St. Louis (1860). Writing on "Progress of American Sculpture in Europe" in the Art Journal in 1871, J. Jackson Jarves hinted, in his sardonic tone, at the prejudice that prevented women getting more such commissions:

> "It is worthy of mention that the American Government, in deference to the growing popular opinion of the fitness of women to do whatever men can rightly do, without requiring any more evidence of personal capacity than if it had been only a question of appointment to civil office, not long ago commissioned a girl in her teens to make a full-length statue of the late President Lincoln, entirely overlooking such claims as might have been urged by those artists of her sex who have actually studied Art." 104

Hosmer was taken seriously, however, although she was not extolled as a great artist: the Art Journal, even so, opined in its preview of the Freedmen's Monument:

> "Of her power to fulfill the trust reposed in her there can be no doubt; her genius is of the highest order; and she has proved her capacity by producing some of the greatest works of sculpture of our age." 105

The heroism which sculpture of a public nature more often than not connoted - one infers it in the passage just quoted - was persistently seen as foreign to the essential character of woman's

art, and this is enough to explain the absence of women from this field of public sculpture; yet, women were absent from the field of public painting, too, indicating that other elements - such as scale and the very publicness itself - of public work militated against women's equal enjoyment of this form of patronage. The most well-known instance of the public patronage of painters in the mid-century is the fresco competitions for the new Palace of Westminster: this can serve as a paradigm.

The artists who were eventually chosen to decorate the new Palace of Westminster were all male.[106] The artists who submitted work in the competitions for those commissions were, however, not. The first stage of the competition was conducted in such a way that the artists whose entries were not selected, should remain anonymous:

> "Each candidate is required to put a motto or mark on the back of his (sic) drawing, and to send, together with his drawing, a sealed letter containing his name and address, and having on the outside of its cover a motto or mark similar to that at the back of the drawing. The letters belonging to the drawings to which no premium shall have been awarded will be returned unopened." 107

Thus, it is tantalisingly impossible to know from the records of the competitions the identities - never mind the sex - of the initial entrants. There was at least one female in their number, however, for Roget records that Mary Ann (Mrs.) Criddle entered a piece, on the subject of Spenser's "Epithalnium". There was only one entry on this subject (Hunt's no.2): nine feet wide and twelve feet high, the entry illustrated the following verse:

> "Lo, where she comes along with portly pace,
> like Phoebe, from her chamber of the east,
> arising forth to run her might race,
> clad all in white, that seams a virgin best,
> as well it her becomes, that we would mean
> some angel she had been.
> Her long loose yellow locks like golden wire

sprinkled with pearl and perling flowers atween,
do like a golden mantle her attire,
and being crowned with a garland green,
seem like some maiden queen:
her modest eyes abashed to behold
so many gazers as on her do stare,
upon the lowly ground affixed are,
nor dare lift up her countenance too bold,
but blush to hear her praises sung so loud,
so far from being proud." 108

Hunt does not illustrate the drawing, one of 140 in that first stage of the competition. The participation of women artists in the following stages of the competition are calculable more nicely, since entrants were named in the second and third competitions. In the second stage, Ambrosini Jérôme submitted a fresco design for "A Roman Contadina and her child" (Hunt's no. 16), two feet six inches wide and three feet one inch high; she was the only female entrant of 84 in this stage. The sculpture designs entered at this stage were all by men, numbering 98. In the third and final stage, all 116 drawn entries and 28 sculptural entries were submitted by men.

The usefulness of this sort of patronage for British artists was much vaunted at the time and afterwards: in publishing his account of the enterprise, Hunt wrote:

> "... the display of works of art was quite sufficient to show that there existed in England a large amount of talent before unknown, which only required encouragement to secure its improvement and ultimate elevation and success." 109

Almost two decades after the competitions, such expressions as the following, on "The Education of the Artist", in the New Quarterly Review, clearly refer to the fresco competitions and their success or failure:

> "There is one point essential to ensure great artists, and that is public patronage. They who devote themselves to the study of the

different branches of art, must be aware that their efforts will be understood by their own country, and that honour will attend success. The public taste must direct them to select the noblest subjects; and the public admiration which is accorded to their works, must be the reward of long and arduous labour. The capricious taste of individual patronage will never raise a great school..." 110

Women's failure to distinguish themselves in public art can be largely ascribed to a lack of the sort of encouragement that is asserted here. It is a chicken and egg process, evidently: the encouragement will only come if the artist shows herself worthy of it, and she will only show herself well when inspired by encouragement; to a large extent, the female artist's male rival for public patronage had, not only more encouragement, but more confidence and more skill (though such inequalities lessened as the period proceeded). Some women were acknowledged, however, as worthy of attention, by another form of public patronage which swelled with the growth of provincial cities: namely, the public art collection.

The National Gallery was chiefly concerned to amass the works of deceased artists, hallowed by time and historians, but the National Portrait Gallery gathered to itself images ancient and modern, in a collection whose criteria did not prioritise the artistic quality of a work but its content-value.[111] This, and the fact that the collection was of a genre widely admitted to and practised by women, evidently allowed work by female hands into this public collection to an extent unparallelled in other public collections of the time. The collection was begun in 1856, and showed itself for the first time in 1858 with 57 works, which were continually added to from thence onward. It was not only, of course, living artists whose work might enter the collection; but among women, modern artists far outnumbered dead ones represented, by the end of the period. (This reflects particularly on the neglect suffered by pre-nineteenth century women artists: Joan Carlile, Mary Beale and Kauffmann are among the 'gone but not

forgotten' in the Gallery's collection, though only Kauffmann's self-portrait entered the collection within the mid-century period.)

The first woman artist to be represented here was Carpenter, whose portraits of Patrick Tytler (fig. 118) and John Gibson (fig. 119) were purchased in 1867, and of Bonington (fig. 120) in 1877. Because here, a work was acquired more on the strength of the sitter than of the artist, the acquisition of works by women artists at the National Portrait Gallery was, throughout the century, erratic and uneven. Other female artists of the mid-century whose work is now in the collection, include Bridell-Fox, whose portrait of her father William J. Fox (fig. 122) entered the collection in 1904; Starr (Canziani), whose portrait of Brian Hodgson (fig. 123) entered the collection in 1913; and Severn (Newton), whose self-portrait (fig. 124) was bequeathed to the collection by her husband in 1895.[112]

In the provinces, women fared just as unevenly well in public collections. In Liverpool, for instance, annual exhibitions of art were held by the Corporation from 1871, and the works purchased from these exhibitions were formed into the Walker Gallery in 1877; of the earliest works thus accumulated, Sophie Anderson's "Elaine" (fig. 126) was bought in 1871, and Starr's "Sintram" (fig. 127) was acquired in 1873. Liverpool's performance seems to have been typical of the provincial city's patronage of women artists in the period: women's share of the exhibition roll was large, but their portion of patronage was small, although distinguished (both Anderson and Starr were well thought of at the time their works were bought.)[113]

The form of patronage in which women's work seems most at home (though not necessarily most successful) was popular patronage, as facilitated by the Art Union, that area of patronage where the embourgeoisement of patronage was considered to show itself most conspicuously in its good and bad character. What an artist painted or sculpted was here more material than how s/he painted

or sculpted, and the decisive factor allowing women success with Art Union subscribers is subject (related, as it was, to status). Even more than the modern bourgeois patron, the lay person was concerned - reasonably enough - that the work purchased should be interesting to look at. The fame of the artist came second to this paramount requirement, and the art-historical and investment values even further down the scale of criteria. Both the character of this popular patronage and its consequence for the artist and art, were vigorously addressed by critics who approved the situation less than did the artists who profited by it: thus the Spectator in 1861:

> ""The Art-Union of London was established to promote the knowledge and love of the Fine Arts, and their general advancement in the British Empire, by a wide diffusion of the works of native artists, and to elevate Art and encourage its professors, by creating an increased demand for their works, and an improved taste on the part of the public." So runs the prospectus of the Society, but he would be a bold man who ventured to assert that these laudable objects were in any way attained by the expenditure of some four thousand pounds sterling on the works of art selected by the prizeholders from the different exhibitions of the year, and now offered to public notice at the Suffolk-street gallery. So poor, so mediocre is the collection, that the words of the prospectus seem to possess a deep ironical meaning..."
> The Art Union prizeholder, the obscure picture dealer, the man who, having newly-acquired a taste for painting, is beginning to form the nucleus of a collection, the remembrance of which will embitter those days when he has acquired larger views of art - these are the encouragers and patrons of manufacturing mediocrity and imbecile conventionalisms - a large and still increasing class. With their aid it is not impossible that we shall be even still further flooded with pictorial rubbish." 104

The Art-Union itself was not unaware of the criticisms it

sustained, and in its annual report for the year 1856/7, as reported in The Builder, answered some of them:

> "The council of the Art-Union of London, in making their report to the subscribers for the twenty-first time, would recall to the minds of those of the present body... the increased appreciation of art and artists on the part of the public now as compared with what it was... The Art-Union of London has played its part, and an important one, in producing this state of public opinion. Addressing itself by its popular character to the masses, establishing local secretaries, not merely throughout the kingdom and its dependencies wherever an Englishman is to be found, but in various other countries, and disseminating far and wide its prints, bronzes, statuettes, reports, and catalogues, it has aided materially in creating the present widely-felt interest in the fine arts... It is sometimes urged as an objection to the Art-Union, that its productions, being issued to large numbers of persons, become in consequence common and valueless. This is not the feeling in which works of art should be viewed... The beauty of the woods and the glory of the sea are common to all, but are none the less surely beauty and glory." 115

The mechanisms of the Art-Union certainly did enable people who had no necessary knowledge of art, to patronise it (a bad thing, the Spectator writer implies): the Art-Union system of membership and prizewinning - the Union called them premiums - ensured that, each year, 273 artlovers could purchase the work of their choice from the rooms of any London exhibition. The premiums, awarded by lottery, were of varying value, from ten to two hundred pounds, but the winner was always permitted to choose a work priced higher than the prize's value and make up the difference. (If a work was priced lower than the value of the premium, the difference was forfeited.) No conclusions can be drawn from the Art-Union's annual reports about consistency of taste in any individual(s), since the premiums were allotted by chance and therefore the prizewinners were constantly different, but certain

trends are apparent in the Art-Union membership as a whole - despite the fundamental aim of the Unions to allow subscribers opportunities of purchasing art purely according to their own preference - trends which were regretted so vehemently by the writer quoted above.

The dominant trend was for a certain type of subject: landscape, domestic genre and literary narrative pictures; given this, the slight extent to which women artists' work features in the selection of prize pictures is surprising, since these are genres in which they specialised to a large degree (see below, chapter 5, for an extended discussion of women's choice of subject matters). Given that the annual number of premiums was 273, the proportion of women's works chosen is low indeed: in the period under discussion here, the yearly number varied from none to eighteen (see tables). Less surprising is the fact that the higher premiums were rarely spent on women's works: the sums usually paid for women's work by a prizewinner were £10, 10 gns, 12 gns, £15, £20, £25.[116] (The annual premiums offered were: one at £200, two at £150, five at £100, and escalating numbers of prizes at £80, £60, £50, £40, £25, £20, £15 and £10. There were also non-monetary awards made every year, such as engravings, models, and casts, which were also distributed by lottery, thus adding to the attractions of becoming a subscriber. Female artists rarely benefited from this part of the Union's patronage, their works presumably being considered, by and large, not prestigious enough to make covetable prizes.[117]) The artists who were chosen by AU prizewinners were sometimes occasional favourites, sometimes quite unknown to the prizewinner, but for the most part they would have been familiar to the readership, say, of the Art Journal (the Art Journal readership and the Art-Union membership were, to a great extent, synonymous.) To choose more magnificently than they did, prizewinners would have had each to be furnished with £200 or £100 premiums - which, as has been made clear, only a handful were - and they would have had, too, to be much more experienced and deliberate patrons than a chance winner of an

annual lottery averagely was. An examination of the records of particular artists patronised by the prizewinning membership of the AU will serve to illustrate what the prevailing taste was in this section of the populace, and how women therefore fared under that taste.

A few exceptions to the generalisation made above, that low premiums tended to be spent on women's work, were Margaret Robbinson's "Happy Idleness" selected from the RA in 1866 for £100; Fanny McIan's "Soldiers' Wives awaiting the results of Battle" chosen from the Free in 1849 for £80; Henrietta Ward's "The first Step" (fig. 64) taken from the RA in 1860 for £75; Jessie McLeod's "Escape of Prince Charles Edward" chosen from the Crystal Palace in 1877 for £60; and Elizabeth Thompson's "Missing" (fig. 128) picked from the RA in 1873 for £60. [118] These choices reflect the tendency to choose a work, rather than an artist, [119] for only Robbinson and McLeod were picked by prizewinners on other occasions (see tables). The range of subjects here represented is also typical of the membership: some history, but not too epic (McIan and McLeod), a domestic subject (Ward) and a fancy picture (Robbinson), and a discerning chance taken on an up-and-coming artist (Thompson). The range of the AU prizewinner's preferences was demonstrated by the annual exhibition of prizewinners' selections: William Rossetti wrote on this occasion in 1864:

> "The general run of the selections was much as usual: mild domesticities, small bits of the picturesque, quiet scraps of landscape, and the like. One knows what to expect from the predilections of Art Union prize-holders, and one's expectations are not belied." 120

This sense of the Art Union sector of the art-buying market being predictable is confused by an equally dominant impression of it as having an erratic character: the Times critic wrote in 1862: "Year by year our picture shows are becoming more and more exclusively places of supply for the very homely kind of demand

created by uncultivated buyers and the haphazard of the Art Union lotteries." [121] These viewpoints, however, have in common a conviction that the Art-Union prizewinners lower the tone of patronage, that their choices pull down the general level of taste to which artists responded, and that the inevitability of their patronage led artists into stultified and slovenly ways. However ingloriously, some female artists (and male, though they do not concern this discussion) benefitted handsomely from this being the case.

The most patronised women in the Art Union lottery during the mid-century were Mrs. William (Emma) Oliver and Caroline Williams, whose landscapes - the former in watercolour, the latter in oil - were selected nine and eight times between 1849 and 1879. The next most chosen was also a landscapist, Sophy Warren, bought by prizewinners six times between 1865 and 1878; and a still-life painter, Eloise Stannard, was bought six times between 1853 and 1866. Thirdly, two painters of narrative works: Emma Brownlow's domestic genre paintings were picked five times between 1859 and 1867, Jessie McLeod's Scottish-flavoured literary, historical and domestic scenes five times between 1849 and 1877. Indeed, throughout the list of women painters' works bought by prizewinners, these genres predominate: landscape, fruit and flowers, and domestic genre, whether oil or watercolour. The taste of Art Union prizewinners was an unambitious as it shows itself to be, surely, because they were uneducated in art (or, rather, unevenly educated in art), and ill-equipped financially: a landscape by Mrs. Oliver (fig. 129) or Sophy Warren (fig. 38), a still-life by Eloise Stannard (fig. 130), a cottage anecdote by Emma Nrownlow (fig. 291) was pleasant to look at, accessible to the purchaser and his or her relations and friends and was quite cheap. [122] Any Art Union prizewinner who was a keen collector of art, could and would no doubt spend other funds on works of great value and special significance: the Art Union prize was a tit-bit for the committed patron, and for the casual patron represented an opportunity to foray into a relatively unexplored territory. It is interesting to see to what a frequent degree prizewinners paid over or under their

premium's value, in selecting the work they did; in the case of women artists, this was a more frequent practice in the latter half of the period, indicating that the artists became more important to the prizewinner for themselves or for their works' own sake, since the prizewinner was more willing to sustain some financial loss (whether in premium value forfeited or extra money paid out) in order to secure the chosen work.

It is almost impossible to know for sure why an individual prizewinner selected a particular work,[123] yet from the patterns that emerge in the period, it would seem that the experience of women artists at the hands of the Art-Union membership can be explained in ways that are not dissimilar to the explanations applicable to other patronal fields. For instance, female prizewinners did not markedly choose the work of female artists, nor were they, in themselves, very numerous. The works of women artists were not as abundant as those of male artists, nor as well-publicised, and were subject to the same prejudices that exerted their influence in other areas. A woman's work might be disdained because it had not been noted by any critic the prizewinner had consulted, because it was badly hung, because it was less able than another work on the same theme, or expressly because it was by a woman. On the positive side, a woman might experience a period of popularity, short or long (Warren, Desvignes or Stannard); she might have a good year (Mrs. Pasmore, Linnie Watt, Mrs. Leroux, Agnes Bouvier Nicholl); she could produce an outstanding work (McIan's "Soldiers' Wives...") or a work that, exceptionally, appealed to the prizewinner (Bridell-Fox's "Enchanted Frog-Prince", Ward's "First Step" (fig.64), Solomon's "Giovannina Roma") or a work that fitted a constant fashion while corresponding to the economies of an AU premium (McLeod's works, Brownlow's work, Farmer's works, Stoddart's works); she might be an artist who had enough reputation and visibility in the exhibitions to be a favourite of a member whose name never came up, and therefore never benefit from his or her patronage within the lottery.[124] Some artists whose output was considerable and consistent, over

a prolonged period of time, appeared only infrequently or only at a particular period in the lists of prizewinners' selections. This indicates the quirks of the lottery system's patronal effects: such artists here, who fall into that category, would be Mary Ellen Edwards (MEE), who appears but once, in 1879, though she had been exhibiting since the early 1860's; Jane Bowkett, who exhibited from 1858 but whose appearances occur bunched up in the mid 1870's; Emma Walter, who exhibited from 1855 but who appears just once, in 1874; Jane Nasmyth and Louisa Rayner, both prolific and steady producers of their type, as already described here, yet appearing only once (Rayner) and twice (Nasmyth), while only one of their sisters does (once). The point is, that in all these cases, when the artist was selected, it was a typical work, not an unrepresentative or unusual one for her.

If the Art-Union was seen by some to represent the worse side of the popularising of art which the period witnessed, its namesake the Art Union (later the Art Journal) would surely have received a more generous verdict on the same question. The Journal was one of the branches of the press most busy in the cause of art - or Art, as the magazine itself would have it - and artists. It acted the patron in various ways, as such a body can, by paying varying attentions to painters, sculptors, graphic artists and engravers: its chief use to artists as a patron, in immediate terms, was its engraving of works, usually one painting and one sculpture per month, and its need for artists as illustrators. Over the years of the mid-century period, the proportion of female artists thus promoted or publicised is very small, and it is apparent that the editorship was susceptible to favouritism. Among women, only Thornycroft benefited conspicuously from this circumstance, though Ward received a lot of verbal coverage in the pages of the magazine, and the young Jane Benham Hay was used by the Journal as an illustrator (see below). As a publiciser of particular works by women artists, the periodical or newspaper did not have to become also its purchaser: the Art Journal, in fact,

usually engraved with the permission of the owner, who was named, but another publication which engraved works by women more often - the Illustrated London News - hardly ever bothered to name an owner, often engraving the work, in fact, while it was still on exhibition (and thus, perhaps, acting as an advertisement for someone to buy the work - though its engravings were of such a generally low level that it seems probable that they made the work less, not more, attractive to anyone who had not yet seen it!)

Patronage of artists by other branches of the press grew throughout the mid-century period, to such a degree that in the 1870's there were a few women who could claim to be graphic artists: the Art Journal's patronage of women artists was restricted to those of the old guard (Carpenter, Thornycroft), friends (Ward), and the obvious winner (Thompson), with kindly attention and constructive criticism awarded generally to women in the field, but other periodicals, such as the Graphic or the Cornhill, gave many commissions too, and widely. There was a growth, during the 1860's and 1870's, not only of illustrated papers (the first number of the Graphic appeared in 1869, representing the new generation of such publications), but also of women attempting the illustrative field (as a result, to a large degree, of the teaching programmes of South Kensington and the Female School and of the continuing opposition in Academy circles to accepting women as 'fine' artists); also, as has been continually emphasised here, the credibility of women as creatures who could live, move and have some of their being outside the home, was growing.

As far as graphic artists of either sex were concerned, it seems that the demarcation line between the fine art world and the world of commercial art was unclear, artists operating in both fields simultaneously and moving either into the latter field from the former or vice versa: the sense is strong, with male and female artists alike, of an artist wanting to have a foot in both camps, the two fields offering different benefits. Given, however, that both fields were more open to men than either was to women,

the number of female artists who appeared to some effect in both fields but made a secure reputation in neither, seems appreciably higher than that of male artists devoting their energies equally to both fine and graphic areas.[125] A case in point is that of Jane Benham (later Benham Hay), who started to exhibit in 1848 at the Academy in oils (which she continued to do until 1862) but is found in 1850, illustrating for the Art Journal, (fig.131) appearing especially in a series of twelve month designs published in 1853, (fig.132) and at the same time breaking into the field of published graphic work with her contribution to Henry Vizetelly's "Evangeline" in 1854, (fig.133), wherein Benham was a co-illustrator of John Gilbert and Birket Foster. In the end, she gained success in the Academy with her oil paintings and later with her "Florentine Procession" at the French Gallery in 1867.[126] A slightly different relationship to the two fields is shown in the case of Sophie Anderson, whose success in painting led to her work being used graphically, insofar as her exhibited oil paintings were reproduced as engravings in periodicals (including the Graphic and the Illustrated London News),[127] and insofar as she was commissioned by the same periodicals to make pictures especially for reproduction in their pages (e.g. the coloured fold-out illustrations in the Illustrated London News, January and December 1870) (figs.134/5). In such a case, the interest in the artist's work for the periodical would be derived from the artist's status as a painter. This circumstance, applied to other women who have been already mentioned here, produced Henrietta Ward's "An English Rosebud" (fig.136) in Ward Lock's 1865 Beauties of Poetry and Art; Osborn's "Our Widowed Queen" (fig.137) in London Society (1865) and her coloured fold-out of "The Christmas Tree" (fig.138) in the Illustrated London News of December 1864; and Jessie McGregor's "An Act of Mercy" (fig.52) on the cover of the Graphic on January 20 1872. An example of an artist who moved the other way, from the graphic field into the 'fine' field, is Helen (Paterson) Allingham, whose first appearance in public as an artist was in the pages of Once a Week, though her most conspicuous work was done for the Graphic in the early 70's: her work appeared on the

cover of the Graphic at least seven times during 1871 and 1872 (fig.139), [128] and she was the illustrator of the major serial story of that period, Margaret Oliphant's "Innocent" (fig.140), which ran from January to March 1873. She began to exhibit watercolours (fig.141) at the Dudley, in 1870, and gradually became known as a watercolourist rather than as an illustrator (this shift of identity was perhaps abetted by her change of name, which occurred on her marriage to William Allingham in 1874, just at the time when her own ambitions seem to have been changing.) [129] Among women, then, there is not necessarily the distinction between a painting appearing in a periodical or book in engraved form (either black and white or coloured), and an illustration appearing in a periodical or book (commissioned for that purpose) which seems to have obtained in the case of most male artists (if only because the differences in medium status seemed to matter less for women's works.)

The prime example of a woman relating to both the graphic and the 'fine' art worlds is Mary Ellen Edwards, later Freer and later Staples, also known as MEE, who very evidently put most of her energies into graphic art yet maintained a worthy record as an exhibitor of oil paintings at the Academy, BI, Suffolk Street and other places, from 1862 to 1903. [130] Characterised by a modern writer as "A prolific illustrator from the 1860's onwards and an early and frequent contributor to the Graphic", and described grudgingly by Forrest Reid as having "in her own small way, a genuine talent", [131] MEE was patronised by various magazines including The Churchman's Family Magazine (which Reid suggests published her first graphic work), Good Words, The Cornhill, the Graphic, the Illustrated Times, the Illustrated London News, the Argosy, the Sunday Magazine, Aunt Judy's Magazine, and London Society. Her importance to these patrons can be gauged by the fact that, for instance, she appeared on the cover of the Graphic at least five times between April 1871 and March 1872, (fig.143), [132] and that in London Society's representative publication "Pictures of Society grave and gay" (1866) her work accounted for nine (fig. 144) of the 91 illustrations in the book, provided by over 30

artists. [133] Her real success in the graphic field can be attested to further by the number of books which featured her work in the same period. Clayton avows that "Soon (after 1859) the initials MEE became familiar and most welcome to the general public... After this, very few periodicals of any standing were without illustrations by MEE." [134]

Another artist as conspicuous in the graphic field as Edwards, but more interestingly so from the point of view which would evaluate the patronage she enjoyed, is Florence Claxton, who evidently aimed to be a satirical draughtswoman. She cannot properly be considered separately from her sister Adelaide, with whom she often collaborated. The sisters were either jointly or separately (it is often difficult to tell which) patronised, throughout the 1860's and 70's, by the following periodicals: the Period, the Illustrated Times, London Society, Good Words, the Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, Judy, and the Churchman's Family Magazine. Their most active patrons were the Period, London Society and the Illustrated Times, the former in the 70's and the latter two during the 60's. The series "England versus Australia" (figs. 145/151) in the Illustrated Times, running from April 1863 to January 1864, demonstrates the barbed vein in which the two worked, and their favourite theme of the 'woman question'. It is this that makes the Claxtons different from women such as Edwards, whose work might be womanly, but not in this political sense. Similarly contentious were the drawings which seem to be by Adelaide, in the Period in 1870: "The good time that's coming" (fig. 152), in the Christmas 1870 number, shows a modern Portia and her emancipated sisters, while "Ritualistic Enthusiasts" (December 3, 1870), (fig. 153), "The Fancy of the Fair" (September 17, 1870), (fig. 154) and "The Grass Widow" (June 18, 1870) (fig. 155) show the social position of woman in a satirical light. Though their political position on the 'woman question' is difficult to locate — they make fun of women as much as they campaign for them - the central and enduring interest of the two sisters' work is clearly the position of women and the

relationship of the sexes. The series "The hours AM and PM in London", (figs. 156/67) which Florence and Adelaide drew and which ran throughout 1864 in the Illustrated Times, shows a predominating interest in female experience, though not being an overtly feminist tract [135]; "Ten shillings a night" (London Society, December, 1865) (fig. 168) shows that companion of the seamstress, the music teacher; "A romance in a boarding house" (London Society, April, 1867) (fig. 169), "Kiss in the Ring" (Illustrated Times, April 15, 1865) (fig. 170), "Innocence and Guilt" (Illustrated Times, December 24, 1864) (fig. 171) show women as sexual creatures; "Twenty-four Hours by my Lady's watch" (London Society, July, 1867) (fig. 172) discusses the social roles of the upper-class female; Florence's illustrations to "Married Off" (1860) and Adelaide's drawings in "A Shillingsworth of Sugarplums" (1875) pull the marriage market to pieces - all these drawings seem to have been made as topical and provoking jabs at an important question, and do not seem to imply any particular position on the patron's part on the 'woman question'. And, indeed, both sisters were commissioned by the same and other periodicals to draw less contentious subjects, as well, (fig. 167) and Adelaide was known in the exhibition rooms rather as a designer of ghostly designs and sentimental watercolours than as a political cartoonist, [136] though this was the reputation which Florence had, showing such drawings in the galleries as "Scenes from the Life of a Female Artist" (1858), "Woman's Work" (1861), and "Battle, murder and sudden death" (1865). [137] Clayton, who has more to say concerning Adelaide than Florence, writes of the latter that she

> "had done what no female artist in all the world had attempted before - made a drawing on wood for a weekly illustrated paper. There were ladies who engraved, though not for newspapers, which involves a very unpleasant amount of hurry, bother, down-right drudgery,aand 'night work'." [138]

Here may be some of the reasons why those women who did seek commercial patronage from the press were many, but those who persisted in the field were few. For, apart from the examples

already given here, there are several women whose drawings appeared sporadically or infrequently in various periodicals - Kate Edwards, (fig.173), Lois Mearns, (fig.174), Edith Dunn (later Hume), (fig.175), Rose Taylor, (fig.176), Mary Dear [139] - and others who disdained the rigours of the press world, confining themselves to seeking the patronage of publishers - EVB, (fig.81), Lucette Barker (fig.177). [140] This line of work was, of course, by no means under-subscribed to by male artists, and until Kate Greenaway, (fig.178), it could be maintained, no female graphic artist established a style as individual as either Richard Leech, of the satirical designers, or John Gilbert, of the older generation, or Fred Walker, of the new generation, so that the work awarded to women in the graphic field would be the 'feminine' work or the commissions that the desired artist had refused. Still, it is a sign of the developing situation of the mid-Victorian woman artist that there are as many examples of women receiving those forms of patronage best termed employment, as are recounted here.

Patronage, of all sorts, is in essence a question as much of credibility as of merit (the two are obviously related), and although at the beginning of the mid-century women artists would have been generally agreed to be lacking on both counts, the fact that they gained considerably in merit as the period proceeded, yet still struggled for patronage, must reflect on the much more gradual development of the credibility they could command. The very uneven picture painted here of the patronal trends of the period as regards female artists would perhaps have to be amended if more evidence became available; yet, as was implied at the beginning of this chapter, that very lack of evidence tells its own story, to an extent. A writer in the Spectator, addressing the question of "Justice to Women" in 1867, declared:

> "If women's novels and pictures did not sell, women's novels and pictures would not be produced, and if women invariably failed at

> the Bar, as we think they would, or as sailors, as they certainly would, the Bar and the nautical profession would never be attempted by them..." 141

It was, it would seem, the case, that women's pictures did not sell, but it was patently <u>not</u> the case, that they were not produced: where they all now are, remains a question, since they have not been to any great extent loved and cherished by Jameson's model patrons and not in great number preserved by Ruskinian guardians of the cultural heritage. The failure of patronage to take on the work of the female artist to any great degree in the period of her development, must be seen as contributing immeasurably to her subsequent invisibility.

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Female artists patronised by Art Union prizewinners, in descending order of popularity

Artist	Year	Work	prize	price	gallery
Emma (Mrs. William) Oliver	1849	"On the Dart"	£15	£15	RA
	1850	"At Rowe, North Wales"	£15	£17	NI
	1851	"The Brathay"	£15	£15	RA
	1855	"Wargrave on the Thames	£10	£10	NI
	1858	"Near the Lake de Garda, Tyrol"	£20	£21	New
	1859	"Wabash on the Moselle"	£15	£15	SFA
	1861	"Bouvignes on the Meuse	£15	£21	New
	1863	"Trabach from the Moselle"	£15	15gns	New
	1876	"The market-place, Verona"	£10	10gns	New
Caroline F. Williams	1865	"Wargrave Ferry, Evening"	£10	£10	SBA
	1865	"Morning on the Medway"	£10	£10	SBA
	1873	"Summer Evening on the Thames"	£10	£10	SBA
	1875	"A Troutstream, Cumbernauld"	£10	£10	SBA
	1877	"Margate, night"	£10	12gns	SBA
	1878	"Summer's Night, Scarborough"	£10	£10	SLA
	1878	"Autumnal Evening"	£10	£10	SBA
	1879	"Night on the Medway"	£10	£10	SBA
Eloise Stannard	1852	"Fruit from Nature"	?	£31.10	BI
	1853	"Fruit from Nature"	£10	12gns	BI
	1855	"Fruit"	£20	£31.10	BI
	1860	"Fruit"	£25	£25	RA
	1862	"Fruit from Nature"	£25	£25	BI
	1866	"Fruit"	£50	£50	BI
Sophy S. Warren	1865	"A Lane in Oxfordshire"	£20	£20	SBA
	1866	"Distant View of Exeter Cathedral"	£25	£25	SBA
	1869	"Beech Hill Common, Hants"	£10	10gns	SBA
	1871	"A Berkshire Watermill"	£20	£21	SBA
	1875	"Evening"	£30	£31.10	SBA
	1878	"On the Avon near Burpham"	£25	18gns	SBA
Emma Brownlow	1859	"Tis an old tale oft told"	£10	£10	SBA
	1860	"Preparing the Village Guy"	£20	£20	BI
	1863	"The shortest way home from School"	£10	£10	BI
	1867	"The Beggar's Story"	£10	12gns	SBA
	1867	"Waiting for the Boats"	£30	£30	SBA

Artist	Year	Work	prize	price	gallery
Emily Desvignes	1862	"Sheep"	£10	£10	RA
	1863	"Sheep"	£10	£10	SBA
	1874	"Sheep, evening"	£10	£10	SBA
	1874	"Cattle, morning"	£10	£10	SBA
	1878	"Cattle, evening"	£10	£10	SLA
Jessie McLeod	1849	"Interior, Fisher's Cottage"	£25	£25	BI
	1853	"The Arrest of Effie Deans"	£60	£60	BI
	1856	"Highland Courtship"	£20	£25	SBA
	1867	"The future home"	£30	£30	SBA
	1877	"The Escape of Prince Charles Edward"	£60	£50	CP
Jane M. Bowkett	1873	"Venus! Looking-glass"	£10	10gns	CP
	1876	"What's o'clock?"	£15	£15	CP
	1877	"Rustle Vanity"	£20	£20	CP
	1878	"A Shepherdess"	£25	£25	CP
Anna (Mrs.J)Charretie	1871	"Little Goody Two-shoes	£30	£31.10	SBA
	1871	"Lady Russell"	£10	£10	SBA
	1873	"Queen Guinevere"	£15	£15	CP
	1875	"Lady Betty at Home"	£35	£45	SBA
Mrs. L. Leroux	1877	"Sunset on the Wye"	£10	£10	CP
	1877	"Llanberis Lake"	£15	£15	CP
	1878	"Sunrise, lake scene"	£10	£10	CP
	1879	"Lake scene near Dolgelly	£15	£18	CP
Mary Margetts	1852	"Roses"	£15	17gns	New
	1853	"Bacchanalian Hunting Cup"	£40	£40	New
	1858	"Still Life"	£25	£30	New
	1864	"Grapes"	£10	£20	RA
Frances Stoddart	1858	"Lower End of Loch Tunnel"	£20	£20	SBA
	1858	"On the Bank of the Mousse"	£15	£15	SFA
	1865	"Valley near Oban"	£10	£15	RSA
	1866	"Southwick Water, Dumfriesshire"	£10	12gns	RSA
Agnes Bouvier (Nicholl)	1870	"Under the Cliff"	£10	£15	SBA
	1876	"Our Kitties"	£10	£12	SBA
	1876	"The task performed"	£20	£20	SLA
Marian Chase	1876	"In the Greenhouse"	£25	£25	OWS
	1877	"A November Nosegay"	£25	£25	New
	1879	"Blackcurrants and Cherries"	£10	12gns	New

Artist	Year	Work	prize	price	gallery
Mrs. H. Criddle	1857	"Children in the Wood"	£25	£25	OWS
	1860	"Auld Robin Grey"	£30	£30	OWS
	1866	"Ophelia"	£40	£36.15	OWS
Mrs. Wm. (E) Duffield	1864	"Spring Flowers"	£15	13gns	New
	1867	"Fruit"	£15	£26.50	New
	1870	"Flowers"	£30	£30	New
Kate Swift (Bisschop)	1858	"The Gleaners"	£20	£22	SFA
	1863	"The Past"	£20	£20	BI
	1864	"Opportunity makes the Thief"	£20	£20	SBA
Linnie Watt	1878	"Meadowsweet"	£15	£15	SLA
	1879	"Buttercups and Daisies	£10	£10	SLA
	1879	"Summertime"	£20	£20	RA
Margaret BAckhouse	1869	"Tattered and Torn"	£10	£10	RA
	1872	"In the Woods"	£15	£52.10	RA
Isabel Bennett	1874	"Summertime"	£10	£10	RA
	1876	"Early Summer on the River Lea"	£10	£10	SBA
J. Bertha	1877	"Evening on the Thames"	£15	£15	CP
	1878	"Sunrise near Capel-curig"	£15	£15	CP
Mary Ann Cole	1854	"The Youthful Hair dresser"	£15	£15	RA
	1858	"Hagar and Ishmael"	£10	£12	SFA
Jane Egerton	1847	"The Nut brown Maid"	£25	£25	New
	1847	"Hush thee, Hush thee, Baby dear"	£15	15gns	New
Mary Gow	1873	"The Morning of the Fair"	£10	£10	BI
	1876	"Out of Date"	£35	£31.10	New
Elizabeth Hunter	1865	"The tiniest one"	£10	£10	BI
	1869	"My Neighbour Opposite"	£10	10gns	SBA
Jane Nasmyth	1853	"Near Dumfries"	£10	£11	SBA
	1855	"Putney Heath, Surrey"	£10	£10	SBA
Mrs. J.F. Pasmore	1877	"Home lessons"	£10	£10	SBA
	1877	"You wild Flowers..."	£20	£20	SBA
Elizabeth Phillips	1849	"The ancient Rathaus, Koblentz"	£15	£15	RA
	1868	"Junction of the Moselle and Rhine"	£30	£45	SBA
Mrs. Profaze	1871	"Maiden Meditation"	£10	£10	SBA
	1872	"Sweet Seventeen"	£10	£10	SBA
E. Redgrave	1877	"Three Playmates"	£35	£35	SBA
	1879	"The Diary, Cowdray"	£10	£10	RA
Margaret Robbinson	1864	"The rocky Chair"	£20	£20	SBA
	1866	"Happy Idleness"	£100	£100	RA

Artist	Year	Work	prize	price	gallery
Helen Thornycroft	1870	"The Winner won"	£15	£15	Dud.
	1878	"Portia pleading"	£10	£10	SLA
Marcella Walker	1878	"The Wanton Troopers.."	£50	£50	SBA
	1879	"The Sailor's Sweetheart"	£40	£50	RA
Augusta Withers	1856	"Wild Flowers"	£50	£50	SBA
	1856	"Goldfinch,etc."	£20	£20	NI
Kate Amphlett	1878	"Cottage near Gilvel"	£10	11gns	SBA
Anna Blunden	1862	"Weston Village, vale of Honiton"	£20	£20	SBA
Eleanor Brown	1858	"Near Temple Lock, Marlow"	£10	£10	NI
G.P. Brune	1879	"Portocotham Bay, North Cornwall"	£10	£10	SBA
Ellen Clacy	1873	"The missing Playfellow"	£25	£25	RA
Ellen Connolly	1878	"My Model's Opinion"	£45	£36.15	CP
Helen Coode	1867	"La fille bien gardée"	£10	10gns	RA
Fanny Corbaux	1849	"Hagar"	£40	£63	New
Louisa Corbaux	1862	"Afraid of the big Dog"	£15	16gns	New
Helga Cramen	1879	"Castle of Chillon"	£40	£40	RA
Mrs. Crawford	1875	"Priscilla"	£40	£42	RA
Mrs. A.G. Dawborn	1879	"Dover Castle"	£25	£25	SBA
Kate Edwards (Sparkes)	1878	"Mother and Child etc"	£40	£42	RA
Mary Ellen Edwards	1879	"I'm so happy"	£20		RA
M.E. Edwards	1876	"On the Common, Leytonstone"	£15	£21	RA
Edith Elmore	1877	"Spring Flowers"	£15	15gns	RA
Jane Escombe	1870	"A Backwater of the Wey"	£20	£20	RA
Emily Farmer	1860	"Stringing Eggshells"	£15	£15	New
Mary Forster	1878	"Summer Morning, Coed-y-ffynon"	£15	15gns	RA
Eliza Bridell Fox	1863	"The enchanted Frog-Prince"	£25	£42	RA
Annie French	1864	"St.Saviour's Church, Jersey"	£10	10gns	SBA
Margaret Gillies	1867	"Judge Croke"	£60	£80	OWS
E. Glover	1876	"My Wintergarden"	£10	10gns	Dud.
Eliza Goodall (Wild)	1848	"The idle Nurse"	£10	£10	RA

Artist	Year	Work	prize	price	gallery
Mrs. Curwen Gray	1864	"The Seamstress"	£35	£35	SBA
Georgina Greenlees	1878	"Corner of the Forest, Inverary"	£40	£40	RA
Kate Greenaway	1877	"Dorothy"	£10	£10	Dud.
E.S. Guinness	1879	"Sweet Seventeen"	£20	£20	Dud.
Sarah Hewett	1852	"Children at Play"	£10	12gns	NI
M. Hipwood	1868	"Spring"	£10	£10	SBA
H.H. Hopkins	1876	"The Reaper's Task is done"	£15	£18	RA
Ambrosini Jérôme	1857	"Gleaners"	£25	£26	BI
Fanny Jolly	1876	"Mateless, November 1875"	£10	£12	Dud.
Louise Jopling	1876	"Lorraine"	£45	£45	RA
Frances Keys	1871	"Evening on Dartmoor"	£15	£15	SBA
? Lauder	1867	"Idling"	£10	£10	RSA
Jessie McGregor	1874	"The old Terrace steps"	£10	£10	RA
Fanny McIan	1849	"Soldiers' Wives awaiting the Result of Battle"	£80	£80	Free
E. Manton	1875	"By the sad sea waves"	£10	£10	CP
Maria Margitson	1875	"Fruit"	£15	15gns	SLA
M. Mason	1876	"The Path through the Beechwood"	£10	£10	SLA
Lois Mearns	1879	"The Solo"	£20	£26.50	RA
Eliza Mellville	1864	"Child of Joy"	£10	£10	SBA
F. Moody	1878	"Roebuck and rough Hounds"	£10	£10	SLA
M. Murray	1854	"Waiting for the Carriage"	£10	£10	RA
Martha Mutrie	1859	"Camellias"	£20	£26.50	BI
J. Naftel	1876	"Olive"	£15	£14	SBA
Barbara Nasmyth	1854	"Loch Katrine"	£10	£10	SBA
? Neumann	1863	"Grandmother's Lesson"	£10	£15	SBA
C.M. Noble	1875	"A common Friend"	£20	£20	SBA
E. Partridge	1879	"Through the Woods, Bavaria"	£15	£15	SLA
E. von Perbandt	1878	"Landscape and Cattle"	£40	£40	CP
E. Percy	1868	"Elaine"	£15	£15	SBA
Kate Perugini (Dickens)	1878	"A competitive Examination"	£30	£35	RA

Artist	Year	Work	prize	price	gallery
Louise Rayner	1877	"High Street, Ludlow"	£40	£40	RA
J. Russell	1870	"Waiting, watching, hoping still"	£15	£15	Dud.
Mrs. Rymer	1857	"A Nook in the Conservatory"	£20	£25	SBA
Kate Sadler	1879	"Satisfaction"	£15	£15	Dud.
A.J. Salter	1876	"Young Squirrels at home"	£10	10gns	CP
Rebecca Solomon	1867	"Giovannina Roma"	£35	£35	RA
Helen Stigand	1870	"Beeches in Knowle Park"	£15	£15	RA
Mrs. G.F. Terrell	1879	"A Daydream"	£30	£30	RA
Florence Thomas	1868	"The New Book"	£15	15gns	SBA
Elizabeth Thompson	1873	"Missing"	£60	£80	RA
L. Tiddemann	1875	"Il Penserosa"	£15	£15	RA
Emmeline Vallentin	1869	"In the Market"	£15	£15	SBA
Emma Walter	1874	"Summer flowers"	£10	10gns	SBA
Eva Ward	1875	"Absent"	£15	£15	RA
Flora Ward	1875	"The Lesson"	£35	£35	BI
Henrietta Ward	1860	"The first Step"	£75	£75	RA
M. Wilson	1876	"Folkestone Harbour"	£30	£31.10	SBA

		Galleries/Exhibitions										Value of Prizes							
Year	Total	RA	SBA	BI	NI	OWS	New	SFA	Dud	RSA	CP	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	more
1847	2						2						1		1				
1848	2	2										1	1						
1849	5	2		1	1		1						2		1			1	1
1850	4		2		2								1	2					1
1851	1	1											1						
1852	3	1		1	1							1	1			?			
1853	4		1	2			1					2						1	1
1854	3	2	1									2	1						
1855	3		1	1	1							2		1					
1856	3		2		1									2					1
1857	4		1	1		1	1					1		1	2				
1858	7				1		2	4				2	1	3	1				
1859	3		1	1				1				1	1	1					
1860	5	2		1		1	1						1	2		1			1
1861	1						1						1						
1862	4	1	1	1			1					1	1	1	1				
1863	6	1	1	2			1	1				3	1	1	1				
1864	7	1	5				1					3	1	2			1		
1865	5		3	1						1		4		1					
1866	5	1	1	1		1				1		1			1			1	2
1867	9	2	4			1	1			1		3	2		2	1			1
1868	4		4									1	2			1			
1869	4		4									3	1						
1870	7	2	2				1		2			1	4	1		1			
1871	5		5									2	1	1		1			
1872	2	1	1									1	1						
1873	6	2	3								1	3	1		1				1
1874	5	2	3									5							
1875	11	2	6	1				1			1	3	3	1		1	2	1	
1876	16	3	4				3	2	2		2	7	5	1		1	1		1
1877	13	2	4				1		1		5	4	3	2	1		1	1	1
1878	18	5	2					5			6	7	3		2	1		3	2
1879	16	6	2				1	4			3	5	3	4	1	1		2	
TOTALS		41	64	14	7	4	19	18	5	3	18								

1. Handbook to British Paintings, Catalogue Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, Manchester 1857, p.13; see also George Wallis British Art pictorial, decorative and industrial, London, 1882; for a more familiar reference to this question, see Elizabeth Lady Eastlake, Memoir of Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, London, 1870, p.147; for modern discussions of this and other issues in the mid-Victorian art world, see David Robertson, Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World, Princteon, 1978, which overlaps with John Steegman, Consort of Taste, Cambridge 1950, p.50ff. The Exhibition itself patronised contemporary artists libarally, but women were few among them: works by Martha Mutrie (438, 444, 446, 451) Carpenter (478), Durant (39), Thornycroft (101, 102), Mary Margetts (564/6), Gillies (569/571a), Mrs. Pickersgill (583), Fanny Corbaux (690), Mrs. Mary Ann Criddle (706, 727), Sarah Setchell (939, 940), Emily Seymour (30) and Mrs. C.A. Seymour (31) were exhibited. Other female artists represented were Bonheur (662, 666), Anne Damer (86) and Kauffmann (78, 80). The selectors were Augustus Egg, Peter Cunningham, Edward Holmes.

2. Anna Jameson, Companion to the Most Celebrated Private Galleries of Art in London, London, 1844, p.383, quoted in Frank Herrmann, The British as Collectors, New York, 1972, p.235.

3. John Sheepshanks (1787-1863), "a frugal and unassuming bachelor who retired in middle age from his father's cloth manufacturing firm at Leeds and devoted himself thereafter to his garden at Blackheath and his collection in Rutland Gate": Robertson, op. cit., p.256; Robert Vernon (1774-1849) had made his money as a horse-jobber during the Napoleonic Wars: see Art Union 1 November, 1847, p.365.

4. "Pages bearing a wedding casket"; it is telling that this one item was by a woman arguably an amateur, for the collections also contained four pieces by women who cannot be considered artists: Miss Clarke (1215), Miss Batty (1216), Lady Morley (1243) and Caroline Norton (1253) - all these were drawings not paintings. In this light, perhaps it is stretching a point to count the Waterford piece as indicating patronage of a female artist.

5. S.C. Hall, The Vernon Gallery of British Art, London, 1853.

6. Art Journal, January 1, 1849, p.1; Vernon left his whole collection to the nation, but the nation (in the person of the National Gallery) did not accept all the works, so that some were auctioned publicly: see Art Journal, August 1, 1849, p.251.

7. Art Union, November 1, 1847, p.365.

8. All three of Carpenter's works are still in the Victoria and Albert Museum where the Sheepshanks collection is housed: none of them is often on show however. The Athenaeum published a list of the items in the collection on February 21, 1857, p.246,

9. It was no.146; the sale took place in Birmingham, 28/9 April, 1858.

0. Setchell's was no.14, Mutrie's no.49; the sales took place in Manchester, December 12, 1856 and January 21, 1857.

1. It was no.17; another item by 'Solomon' was listed: "Oliver Goldsmith and his firends at Ranelagh" (no.24), but this was probably by her brother Abraham (perhaps his 1851 RA exhibit); the sales took place on October 15 and 19, 1858.

2. By 1860, the Ward was in the Grapel collection; the Nasmyth's history has not been traced.

3. The Daily News, May 20, 1870, quoted in G. Redford, Art Sales, London, 1888, vol.1, p.180; for more on Bullock, see G. Reitlinger, The Economics of Taste, London, 1961/70, vol.1.

4. These were the two paradigms by which female flower and fruit painters were usually expressly judged; the question of the irresistible rise of the male within a 'feminine' field will be discussed in chapter 5 below, with particular reference to Lance and Hunt; in non-artistic fields, this is the phenomenon which renders men doctors and surgeons and women nurses and secretaries in the traditionally feminine field of healing, and renders men haute couturiers and women seamstresses in the traditionally feminine field of dressmaking. The only female painters of fruit and flowers comparable to Lance and Hunt who were not constantly compared to them, were the Mutries - who were latterly compared to Henri Fantin Latour!

5. Elhanan Bicknell's son, Henry, retained some of his father's pictures, and "Flowers", probably by Martha, was among them.

6. The Star, April 28, 1863, quoted in Redford, op. cit., vol.1, p.166; for more on Bicknell, see Reitlinger, op. cit.

7. Fine Arts Quarterly, May/October 1863, vol.1, p.420. Ten years earlier, the aesthetic consequences of the ill-informed patron had been raised in an anonymous article, entitled "The Fine Arts and the Public Taste", in Blackwood's Magazine: "Fashion injures artists enough by throwing all its extravagance of patronage into a few hands; and I do not think the fine arts are at all advanced by the outrageous sums given for really unimportant and mdeiocre works, provided they be by certain painters... Lovers and patrons of art fall into classes, and all must have caterers. There is the refined, the educated taste, and the over-refined taste; and the people's privilege of being vulgar must not be overlooked" (Blackwood's Magazine, July 1853, vol.74, no.453, p.103). Another point of view was that those buying art could only choose well if they had good material to choose from: "The purchaser can play his part only when he has the meritorious work offered him, and after having been taught by the frequent exhibition of such works." (The Builder, March 31, 1860, p.198 reviewing the SBA.)

8. See, for instance, the Grindlay sale (January 5/9, 1887, London (Christie's)), in which Coleman (one), Duffield (two), Louisa Sharpe (one) and MEE (two) were included among a collection of 333 paintings and drawings; the Cosier sale (March 4/15, 1887, London (Christie's)), which included four Coleman's, two

Allingham's, three Duffield's, just in the first day's sale of 118 works.

19. The Keeper of the Queen's Pictures at Osborne believes the former to have been destroyed in 1924, and it is believed no visual record of it remains.

20. The dates given in this paragraph are those dates at which the work was certainly in the said collection, not necessarily the date of entry or sale.

21. James Dafforne, "British Artists, their Style and Character", no.75, Art Journal, September 1, 1864, p.261; another sign of the Mitchells' patronage is presumably the artist's "Percy Mitchell" exhibited at the Academy in 1866.

22. Jeremy Maas, Gambart: Prince of the Victorian art world, London, 1975, p.113; for Flatou, see Catalogue of Mr. Flatou's Exhibition, London, 1856 and the Illustrated London News, April 23, 1859, p.400: another work by an artist called Solomon in the 1856 sale was no.73, "Little Nell", which is more likely to be by Rebecca than Abraham, for whom no such title is recorded. The "page" was no.37, "Win her.." was no.41.

23. Art Journal, January 1, 1849, p.1; for an interesting discussion of this question see "Picture Dealers and Picture Societies", The Chromolithograph, January 2, 1869, p.187 (vol.2). Other dealers of the period were William Vokins, the Grundy family, Thomas Agnew and sons, and Henry Wallis (who began business in Gambart's shadow); for general information on these entrepreneurs, see Maas, op. cit.

24. See Virginia Surtees, Sublime and Instructive, London, 1972.

25. ibid, p.146.

26. ibid, p.157, p.162, p.181, p.239.

27. The paintings in question are "The Dismissal of Romney", known as "The Tryst" (1860; Tate Gallery) and "That was a Piedmontese.." (1862; Tate Gallery).

28. See Diana Orton, Made of Gold, London, 1980 and Edna Healy, Lady Unknown, London 1978; her support of women artists took the form of establishing a hostel in London for female art students: see Orton, p.224.

29. Athenaeum, March 25, 1854, p.380; the whereabouts of these works are now unknown.

30. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.35.

31. ibid, p.179.

32. ibid, p.302.

33. ibid, p.183.

34. ibid, p.262.

35. Roget, op. cit., vol.2, p.425.

36. F. Hays, Women of the Day, London, 1884, p.21.

37. Athenaeum, April 13, 1861, p.502; the critique is reservedly favourable.

38. Gustav Waagen, Treasures of Art in Great Britain, 1854/7, vol.4, p.298;(the only other active woman artist whom Waagen notices is Eliza Sharpe, vol.2, p.352.) "A real service was rendered to art by the careful studies which this energetic lady made of medieval Italian buildings and decoration, in co-operation with the active course of fresco-tracing undertaken by Mr. Layard..." Spectator,review of SFA, April 3, 1858, p.380; "... the public mind had hardly yet begun to realise that there were any pictures worth collecting or studying other than the works of the time honoured masters of the later Italian and the Dutch and Flemish schools... The pioneer work of Sir Henry Layard and Mrs. Higford Burr had not yet opened the eyes of the British tourist to the beauty and interest of the fresco-paintings by the early painters of Northern and Central Italy" Lionel Cust, Pictures in the Royal Collections, London, 1911, p.3.

39. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.409.

40. Among EVB's published drawings were "A Children's Summer" (1853), "Child's Play" (1852), "The May Queen" (1860), "Waifs and Strays from a Scrap-book" (1861), "In the Firwood" (1866), "Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen" (1872), "The Dream Book" (1870), "Beauty and the Beast" (1875). Boyle and Waterford were cousins and friends, and a sketch exists by EVB of Waterford (see fig. 60), while correspondence between the two is quoted by Augustus Hare, Two Noble Lives, London, 1893. See below, chapter 6.

41. Respectively, Ruskin to Waterford, October 3, 1863, quoted in Surtees, op. cit., p.54 (letter W.38); Rossetti writing in Fine Arts Quarterly, January/May 1864, p.198; W.H. Hunt to Rev. H.M. Neville, February 21, 1895, quoted in Neville, Under a Border Tower, London, 1896, p.81.

42. See Clayton on Eleanor Brown (vol.2, p.183), Bouvier (vol.2, p.36), Anna Maria Fitzjames (vol.2, p.277) and others; of the third SFA show, the Builder's reviewer reported: "the public have acknowledged it by a good attendance, and the purchase of nearly £400 worth of pictures already..." (February 26, 1859, p.154).

43. A relevant comparison can be made between Joanna Boyce and her brother George Price Boyce, also an artist: she never, as far as her letters and notebooks reveal, bought a work from a fellow-artist, while G.P. Boyce was a more than frequent purchaser (and 'swapper') of works by Rossetti and others (the artists' descendants have a small sketch by George Mason which was apparently G.P. Boyce's): see The Diaries of G.P. Boyce, ed. V. Surtees, Norwich, 1980, for a vivid insight into his entrepreneurial activities.

44. The drawings were "Fishing-Boats off Hastings" and "Evening Scene": the former could be the "Fishing-boats, Hastings" shown at Suffolk Street, 1869 or "Fishing boats coming home,

Hastings" shown at Liverpool, 1872; Bodichon's position in that circle was rather that of the giver of support than a taker of it: W. Graham Robertson described the situation thus: "perhaps her most striking claim to originality amongst that happy-go-lucky band lay in her possession of a settled income, by no means a colossal one, yet allowing her throughout life to help a perfect procession of lame dogs over stiles" (W.G. Robertson, op.cit., p.289).

45. The Creswick, by Martha, was shown in Paris in 1865; the Pyne's (sold to one Holland in 1871) were exh.

46. See the artist's daughter's autobiography, Estella Canziani, Round about Three Palace Green, London, 1939, p.30; the author was also an artist.

47. Quoted in Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.199; Ruskin described the work (whereabouts now unknown) in Academy Notes that year: "An entirely earnest and very notable study... She has tried hard, not without fair success, to express the rise of the wave - hardly visible in the long swell - till the foam shows at its edge: the wet shingle is also very good; the boat well drawn; and the beds of pointed 'gothic' wonderfully true in bend, as well as various in colour." Cook and Wedderburn, op. cit., vol.14, p.231.

48. The three images shown here are probably all by Osborn; the Fox portrait is untraced, and no contemporary descriptions of it have been found. Girton college authorities do not know the whereabouts nor the artist of the half-length, which is very evidently a cut-down image of the horizontal Osborn. The vertical portrait is very visibly signed 'Emily Osborn' (fig. 92) and corresponds to verbal descriptions of the 1884 portrait just as well as the horizontal image (fig. 90).

49. Whereabouts of all these works unknown; they were exhibited, respectively, RA 1860, RA 1852, not shown, RA 1862.

50. Magazine of Art, December 1883, p.

51. English Art in 1884, ed. Henry Blackburn, New York, 1884, p.159.

52. The most challenging case among the royal women, in this respect, is that of Princess Louise (Victoria's sixth child, born 1848), who took up sculpture under Boehm and others, and exhibited three portrait works at the Royal Academy, in 1868, 1869 and 1874.

53. Winslow Ames, Prince Albert and Victorian Taste, London, 1967, p.180.

54. ibid, pp.17, 18, 20, 29.

55. Martin Briggs, Men of Taste, London, 1847, p.197.

56. John Oldcastle, "Queen Victoria and Art", Magazine of Art, 1880, p.287: for another account of Victoria as an amateur, see Marina Warner, Queen Victoria's Sketchbook, London, 1979.

57. After Albert's death, the Queen took a much less vivid interest in the arts, and was mostly concerned to perpetuate his influence thereon.

58. Ames, op. cit., p.29.

59. The painting was earmarked for a Mr. Galloway, who had already become the owner of the work when the Queen expressed a wish to buy it. Mr. Galloway reluctantly deferred to his monarch - at a price: see Thompson's own account of the matter (Butler, op. cit., p.111) - and the painting became the Queen's and remains in the royal collection.

60. James Dafforne, Art Journal, September1, 1864, p.262.

61. The works in question have a certain Nazarene preraphaelitism about them: the artist was described thus in the Athenaeum in 1852: "This fair artist was born and bred in the Eternal City, and Rome speaks in her design and in her colouring" (June 19, 1852, p.679).

62. Unpublished letter from Oliver Millar to the writer. Records of these appointments can be found in such publications as the Court and City Register, the Imperial Calendar and the Royal Kalender.

63. None of these artists is presently represented in the royal collection, according to the Keeper of the Royal Collection, with the exception of Ross/Dalton, who is still represented by "about half a dozen miniatures".

64. The same applies to these artists as to those in the previous note. The Keeper of the Royal Collection could make no suggestion as to where the works undoubtedly executed for the royal household by these artists, might now be.

65. She exhibited at the SFA from its inception to 1861, thence-forward showing annually at the New Society of Painters in Watercolours (the Institute), while also appearing at the Academy 1834/47 (not 1844 and 1845), and on sundry occasions at the BI, Suffolk Street, and, later, the Grosvenor.

66. Clayton, op.cit., vol.2, p.114.

67. Whereabouts of these works unknown.

68. For an account of the artist's life, see Sheila Birkenhead, Illustrious Friends, London, 1965; she died of measles, in her 34th year (1866).

69. ibid, p.124.

70. Munby's diary, May 16, 1859, quoted in Derek Hudson, Munby, Man of two Worlds, London, 1872, p.33.

71. Birkenhead, op. cit., p.125.

72. Illustrated London News, January 27, 1866, p.86: "In London Charles made her work as hard as he did himself. In addition, to her own work she made all the drawings, some of them very large, to illustrate his lectures. He was most particular about these drawings and if the slightest thing was wrong they must be done again" (Birkenhead, op.cit., p.157).

73. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.100.

74. Illustrated London News, March 19, 1870, p.296; similarly, "Mme. Jerichau, the accomplished Danish artist, whose works are well known and highly esteemed in England as well as in her own country..." (Art Journal, December 1, 1869, p.382).

75. Illustrated London News, June 4, 1864, p.554.

76. Ward, Memories, p.78.

77. ibid, p.198.

78. See McKenzie, op. cit., p.80.

79. Art Journal, March 1, 1873, p.80; the artist was probably only in her forties: she died in Paris, but the reason why is not clear in obituary notices.

80. Wolsey Chapel and the Albert Chapel are the same; Gunnis, in fact, goes so far as to write: "In 1856 and 1857 she assisted her old master, the Baron de Triqueti (1804-1874) to execute the monument of Leopold, King of the Belgians (uncle of the Queen), in St. George's Chapel, Windsor" (op. cit., p.135): apart from the dates being incorrect, the secondary sense given to Durant's contribution is also quite wrong, from the evidence of papers in the royal archives. The papers referred to here and below are ref. W.R.M. 468.

81. Queen Victoria's Diary, 1866, p.216 and 1867, p.177/8, courtesy of the royal archives.

82. Art Journal, June 1, 1866, p.172.

83. Thornycroft 1814-1895, Durant c. 1830-1873.

84. Illustrated London News, March 22, 1862, p.

85. Art Journal, December 1, 1860, p.370; the conviction that sculptural work was so foreign to women's powers and capabilities as to be actually beyond them, resulted in implications that Hosmer, for instance, did not do her own work (Frances P. Cobbe writing to the Critic, January 12, 1863, p.527).

86. ibid, October 1, 1861, p.344.

87. Gunnis, op. cit., p.392.

88. "The late Mrs. Mary Thornycroft", Magazine of Art, June 1895, p.305.

89. Elfrida Manning, Bronze and Steel, London, 1932, p.51.

90. Stephens, op. cit., p.305.

91. Alexandra was nineteen in 1863, Alice the same age in 1862, the Princess Royal (Victoria) was eighteen in 1858.

92. These two latter statues are sometimes given to the artist's husband: see, for instance, Fine Arts Quarterly, vol.3, October 1864/January 1865, p.420; the artist's grand-daughter, on the question of attributions to Mary or Thomas Thornycroft wrote in an unpublished letter to the present writer: ".. mainly it was Thomas who aimed at "ideal" work and Mary who turned out the portrait busts which kept the family going!"

93. Manning, op. cit., p.52.

94. Illustrated London News, March 14, 1863, p.290.

95. See Art Union, 1848, p.138 and p.182; Art Journal 1860, p.370; ibid, 1861, p.344.

96. Illustrated London News, January 30, 1858, p.98.

97. Stephens, op. cit., p.305.

98. Fellowes exhibited at the Academy 1867/72; an account of her Prince Consort appears in the Graphic, December 9, 1871, p.555. Grant exhibited at the Academy 1866/92; see below also.

99. Illustrated London News, February 21, 1863, p.206.

100. The remaining eight were Baily, Foley, Thrupp, Durham, Weekes, Wyon, Westmacott, McDowell (see Illustrated London News, March 30, 1861, p.301).

101. Fine Arts Quarterly, vol.1, May/October 1863, p.337.

102. Illustrated London News, May 30, 1863, p.587.

103. William Sharp, Progress of Art in the Century, London, 1900/2, p.173.

104. Art Journal, January 1, 1871, p.6; for an account of Hosmer's career, see Cornelia Carr, op. cit., 1913; for more of Jarves, particularly on Hosmer, see his The Art Idea, 1864 (reprint Harvard, 1960) ch.16, where he describes her as "a self-made sculptor, by force of indomitable industry and will... She has not creative power, but has acquired no small degree of executive skill and force."

105. Art Journal, January 1, 1868, p.8.

106. See F.K. Hunt, The Book of Art, London, 1846, p.82 and p.171.

107. ibid, p.80, regulation 8.

108. Roget, op. cit., vol.2, p.338/9; Hunt, p.83.

109. ibid, p.79.

110. Anon, "On the Education of the Artist", New Quarterly Review, 1861, (vol.3) p.347.

111. Among the Art Journal's responses to the growing collection as it showed itself in 1858, were the following comments: "Portraiture without pictorial excellence has no marketable value, yet many portraits of little intrinsic worth might be of great consideration in a national collection" (February 1, 1858, p.59) "In this especial department of our national collections, the one thing that we are in search of is, likeness - not high Art... A great man (sic) by a little artist is admissible into this collection... a National Portrait Gallery is not a National Gallery of the Fine Arts" (July 1, 1858, p.222).

112. These works are, respectively, no.226, no.232, no.444 (also fig.121, a chalk sketch, no.492, given in 1877), no.1374, no.1707 and no.977. The collection contains other pieces of work which are mentioned in these pages, by artists of the period: in

all cases, see National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue 1856/1869, ed. Maureen Hill, London, 1970, (e.g. fig. 125).

113. On the theory behind public collections, see Henry Cole, Fifty Years of Public Work, London, 1884, p.269ff.

114. Spectator, August 10, 1861, p.866 and December 7, 1861, p.1342; see also, in reviewing the Winter Exhibition: "... the proportion of pictures painted solely with the view of selling, which have no other object than the portrayal of the eccentricities of apocryphal peasants, the games of impossible boys in bright orange and green jackets, and the questionable industry of women in pink caps who are always pretending to spin, but are, in reality, only looking at the spectator, is very great" Spectator, November 11, 1861, p.1313. The debate was no longer new in 1861, but had opened almost with the establishment of Art-Unions in Britain: see, for instance, William Thackeray's articles in the Pictorial Times, "Letters on the Fine Arts", March 18, 1843 and April 1 and 18, 1843, replying to criticism from the Athenaeum of Union Members' tastes in art (Athenaeum, September 3, 1842, p.790).

115. The Builder, May 2, 1857, p.237.

116. See above, chapter 3, p.180, for a discussion of prices of women's work at the SFA, and Woman, March 2, 1872, p.129 for more of the same. A specific instance of the modesty of women artists in putting monetary value on their work is in Gambart's account of his meeting with Henriette Browne, whose consistent patron he became: "To my amazement, she quoted the smaller (works) at 300 francs each, and the larger at 800 francs. These prices were more than modest, and I said that if the lady would paint me some more, I would pay for them a much higher rate,... "I fear, madam, that you are only an amateur... I am very sorry for your not being in need of money; as the price you put upon your work amply proves, you only cultivate art for an amusement. If you were poor and had to earn your living by your talent, which for your sake as an artist I could wish were the case, I would predict a brilliant career for you, and am sure you would soon occupy a high place in the artistic world. She replied that, in fact, she was not in need of money, but that all the same she was not indifferent to earning something by her work and would be very glad to continue a connexion so happily begun..." (unidentified newspaper cutting, Kensington Library, dated April 27, 1901).

117. See, for a typical example of the artists commissioned by the Art-Union in the 1850's and 1860's, at least, the annual report for 1862/3 as reported in the Builder (May 2, 1863, p.305): artists whose work has been used by the Union as premiums of one sort or another are all male, with the exception of Mary Thornycroft, and include such favourites as Maclise, Frith, Paton, Wyon and Foley. However, on the other hand, the Art Journal reported in May 1873 (p.159): "The Council (of the Art Union) has resolved to produce, in bronze, a revised version of the statuette of Cimabue, for which the modeller,

Miss Emily Selous - now Mrs. Fennessy - of the Female School of Art, received last year a national gold medal, a national bronze medal, and a Princess of Wales scholarship".

118. The exhibitions from which prizewinners selected were, in order of frequency, Suffolk Street, the Academy, the New Society of Painters in Watercolour (the Institute), the SFA and Crystal Palace exhibitions, and the BI.

119. An example of this process is William Holman Hunt's experience with his "Eve of St. Agnes" (The Flight of Madeleine and Porphiro) sold from the 1848 Academy to one Charles Bridger, who won a £70 prize: Hunt recalled that when he wrote to Bridger suggesting he choose Hunt's work to expend his premium upon, the patron-to-be wrote back, saying "that he should look at all the pictures, that if any other was better he should select that; otherwise he might take mine" (Hunt, op. cit., 1905, p.111). (Hunt had had an earlier work sold through the Art-Union lottery: this was "Woodstock").

120. Fine Arts Quarterly, January/May 1864, vol.2, p.305.

121. Times, February 10, 1862, p.10; see "Lotteries and Art-Unions" The Chromolithograph, March 20, 1869, vol.2, p.343 for a discussion of the workings of such systems, in this country and abroad.

122. Relevant considerations here are medium and scale and reputation; it has been impossible to establish whether women altered their prices to suit their potential market, pricing one work or similar works higher or lower at different exhibitions (say, in London and out of it), or whether they lowered prices as works did not sell (such that a piece might appear at a second exhibition priced lower than on its first appearance), but such statistics would be interesting to establish, reflecting as they would both on women's confidence and on their money-mindedness.

123. To judge from Holman Hunt's experience (see above note 117), the reasons could be confusion and embarrassment at having won the prize and being obliged to deploy it; see letter from Bridger to Hunt, 24 June 1848 (John Rylands Library, Manchester).

124. Although other work by these artists is still known, the whereabouts of those of their pictures which are recorded as prizewinners' choices, are uniformly unknown now.

125. For a useful, if subjective, account of illustrators and graphic artists of the period, see Simon Houfe, Dictionary of British Book Illustrators and Caricaturists, 1800-1914, London, 1978.

126. See below, chapter 5. She exhibited at the RA nine works, at the SFA and at the French (Winter) exhibitions.

127. For instance, Illustrated London News, November 10, 1866, p.448; ibid, May 1868, p.465; the Graphic, 1870, frontispiece.

128. Namely, "Will the ice bear?", January 14, 1871; "May", May 13, 1871; "Being towed", December 13, 1871; "A special Favourite of St. Valentine", February 10, 1872; "Mamma's Birthday", June

15, 1872; "Fashion repeats itself", September 7, 1872; "A Sip at the Fountain of Trevi, Rome", November 23, 1872.

129. She ceased to exhibit at the Dudley after 1874, and began to appear at the Academy.

130. She exhibited 36 works at the Academy, two at the BI, one at the SFA, six at Suffolk Street and many at the Dudley.

131. "English Influences on Van Gogh", Arts Council Great Britain 1974/5, p.51; Forrest Reid, The Illustrators of the eighteen sixties, New York, 1975 (London, 1928), p.261. See also Simon Houfe, op. cit., p.294.

132. Namely, "The Rival Blues", April 8, 1871; "St. Denis", May 6, 1871; "The Communist Prisoners at Versailles", August 19, 1871; "All Hallows' Eve", November 4, 1871; "Thanksgiving Day" March 2, 1872. Her work appeared also on the front of the Illustrated London News, December issue, 1878.

133. Other female artists featured were Osborn, Florence Claxton and Adelaide Claxton: the male artists included Millais, Walter Crane, Fred Walker, Phiz, Horsley, Edward Poynter, Lawless and George Dumaurier.

134. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.77.

135. This presumably took its inspiration from G.A. Sala's "Twice Round the Clock", which appeared in Vizetelly's The Welcome Guest from May to November 1858, and meant to be a Mayhew-like examination of London life. It was illustrated, by William McConnell.

136. "Miss Adelaide Claxton, having succeeded in astonishing us with her remarkable ghosts last year, somewhat imprudently attempts to renew the sensation now... Miss Claxton's ability in this peculiar line is indisputable..." (Saturday Review, March 9, 1867, p.303); "Miss Adelaide Claxton has of late been seeing ghosts. Judging from the number of spectres she is now exhibiting in more than one gallery, it might be supposed the lady is a partner in Pepper's patent..." (Art Journal, March 1, 1867, p.88).

137. Recognition of the two artists as satirists, ebbed and flowed: in 1865, Florence was called "That naughty humourist" in the Illustrated London News (April 8, p.338), while the next year the Art Journal critic wrote, "The two Miss Claxtons are amazingly clever" (March 1, 1866, p.71); Clayton discusses them as humorous or comic artists (op. cit., vol.2, p.44/5); while, in later times, Forrest Reid wrote of "the work of Adelaide and Florence Claxton, and other third-rate illustrators" (op. cit., p.231) and Simon Houfe refers to "Florence Claxton's dreadful social subjects" but defines both sisters simply as 'Illustrator' (op. cit., p.121 and p.261/2).

138. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.44.

139. Kate Edwards is almost certainly Catherine Edwards, later Sparkes, b.1842, fl.1860's and mentioned in Houfe op. cit., p.294; Lois Mearns exhibited at the Glasgow Institute and the

RA, infrequently, in the 1860's and 1870's and drew occasionally for the London Society in the mid-sixties; Edith Dunn exhibited at the RA, BI, SFA, Suffolk Street, Grosvenor and Dudley between 1864 and 1892, drawing occasionally for the Quiver, Belgravia and London Society during the 1860's and Houfe mentions her, op. cit., p.292, while Gleeson White mentions her, p.74 (English Illustrators, the Sixties, London, 1897): Rose Taylor drew infrequently for London Society in the sixties; Mary Dear's work appeared in the Illustrated Times, 1855; she exhibited at the RA 1848/59, drawing a set of seasons for the Art Journal in 1854, and mentioned by Houfe, op. cit., p.281.

140. See above, note 36, for EVB's published work; she is mentioned by Forrest Reid, op. cit., p.253 and by Houfe, op. cit., p.239. Barker's work appeared in Daldy and Bell's Poetry of the Year (1852), Charles Griffin's Poetry of the Year (1853): see Christable Maxwell, Mrs. Gatty and Mrs. Ewing, London, 1949, p.105/8, for biographical information.

141. "Justice to Women", Spectator, April 13, 1867, p.411.

CHAPTER 5: PICTORIAL TYPE AND STYLE

Whether there was or was not, in the mid-century, a recognisably feminine or female art, distinct from other art (which by implication must be made by men) is immensely arguable, whether one considers form or content, or both. It was, however, clearly the case that art made by women was widely thought to be quite definable (and therefore predictable, not to say pre-ordained). This issue is the first that must be examined before one can get near to specific works, because it so often stood in the way of a useful assessment of a woman's works, came between the picture or statue and the observer, critic or patron. Certain elements of the traditional notion of female art are so trite as to be obvious to recall: flower-painting, small water-colours, the timid and sentimental fancy figure, the fond but un-distinguished portrait, pretty landscapes - these images came to mind without a second thought for many at the mid-century, and were brought out on parade when the Society of Female Artists arose:

> "Groping our way through acres of flowers, babies, Byronic heads, and other characteristics characteristics of the Exhibition... (and) Summing up the characteristics of female art, we find it tender and refined, but essentially unimaginative, restricted, patient, dealing chiefly with Blenheim spaniels, Castles of Chillon, roses, first-borns, Zillahs, camellias, ball-dresses, cop copies, and miniatures"

> "In time we shall have something more than cottage children, superhumanly pink, and something more thoughtful and beautiful than even copies of trees, flowers, and stones"

> "in the department of figure-painting there is little that is satisfactory, still less that evidences originality either in subject or treatment: studies of heads and rustic figures, an occasional illustration of a story, a large proportion of landscapes, a yet larger number of fruit and flower pieces, and a fair sprinkling of architectural 'bits' form the chief features of the collection."

> "One sees at once that the Englishwoman is a lover of nature before all: she loves flowers, the country and the woods; glades

"One sees at once that the Englishwoman is a lover of nature before all: she loves flowers, the country and the woods; glades seen through forest trees; birds nests in the midst of wild flowers; all those sweet and soft beauties which nature the good, offers us, strike the imagination of the English lady artist." 1

As is the case with most generalisations, however, there was an obvious conflict, as the period wore on, between what women artists were presumed to produce and what they did, in fact, produce - and between what other parties wished them to create and what they, themselves, wanted to create. Thus, there had to be room made for the reality of women's work, whether opposed or not to the myth or tradition of it:

> "Of the 600 pictures exhibited, 430, more than two thirds, are watercolours. Amongst the subjects the ladies most affect, flowers and landscapes must be put in the first place; they do not seem to have any predilections for the painting of religious and historical subjects, or genre pictures, and even portraiture is only cultivated by them in a secondary degree... The English lady thinks and reasons, she is not at all impassioned, she is not excited...." 2

and, progressively often, the tradition was expressed as less hard and fast, though persuasive:

> "It may be that in the more heroic and epic works of art the hand of man is best fitted to excel; there remain gentle scenes of home interest, and domestic care, delineations of refined feeling and subtle touches of tender emotion, with which the woman-artist is eminently entitled to deal" 3

and then, more radically but erratically, it was seen that though they might produce a forseeable art, women need not: "As far as I know lady painters they always let their feelings run away with them, and get to painting angels and mourners when they

should be painting brickbats and stones." [4]

Critical comment throughout the period reflected, at one and the same time, that there was a general assumption about female art, and that women's work did not necessarily coincide with this: "In a ladies' exhibition a line must be reserved for fruits and flowers..." [5]; "Few ladies devote themselves to subjects so unsentimental (as "Cart-horses belonging to the Lion Brewery" by Mrs. A. Shirley, SFA, 1858)" [6]; "...more ambitious female painters, who devote themselves to pathetic and humorous themes" [7]; "This is thoroughly a woman's subject which a woman's heart and hand may best understand and paint (Ward's "Incident in the Life of Mary Queen of Scots", RA, 1863) (fig.18)" [8]; "A subject not usually chosen by ladies (.....) A class of subject not often painted by ladies (Mary Margetts' "Mallart and Teal", 1855 and "Pheasants", 1857)" [9]; "Mrs. McIan, as a woman, has seized the pathetic side of a great social question ("Highland Emigrants", SFA, 1857)" [10]; "But what surprises one most is, that the painters in general have so little feeling for colour, the very faculty most attributed to women" (SFA, 1861). [11]

In trying to define and discuss what was seen as feminine in art, it is useful to consider what was found to be masculine, when occurring in work by women, and this is a difficult task, for although the notion of masculinity was frequently and easily used to connote approval and merit, its precise qualities were seldom outlined: they appear, however, to have been understood (by the conventional mind, at least) to lie in decisiveness and confidence. These were deemed inappropriate in women's work if the result of their application was unwelcome: Osborn's "The Escape of Lord Nithsdale" (fig. 12) of 1861, was contested thus by the Athenaeum critic:

> "To turn from one lady-artist to another, it may be profitable to compare the spirit and genuine artistic faculty of all Mrs. Well's works (fig. 14) with the commonplace, man-aping, conventional vulgarity of Miss Osborn's present picture..." 12

Here it is obvious that to be masculine is to be unfeminine and therefore not good; the same sense of femininity being essential to a woman making good art occurs in the Art Journal's comment on Emma Walter's dying chaffinch "Just Shot" (1855): "nothing can exceed the accuracy with which the leaves and grass are represented, but the subject is scarcely suitable for a lady." [13]

But as the cause of women artists gathered support, and they showed themselves to be more various and less predictable in their work than the stereotypical image of female art suggested, the suggestion that good art was masculine (and therefore, inevitably, feminine art was bad art) became more and more frequently articulated, meaning that a modicum of the masculine was welcomed in women's art. Thus:

> "Mrs. Murray has a nosegay of contributions, bright as crocuses, sweet as hyacinths. She paints with a manly firmness" [14]

> "Though by a female hand, it is essentially a masterly picture. It has all the general excellence which skilled male Art could have brought to its illustration, whilst in some of its more touching details... there is a delicacy of thought and a refinement of treatment which are especially the attributes of high female intelligence. (Ward's "Episode in the Life of Mary Queen of Scots") (fig.18)" [15]

> "This study is in a firm masculine style, tempered by infinite sweetness of painting, especially in the lilac (Margaret Robbinson's "Ballad-Singer of Connemara, Ireland", 1858)" [16]

It will be seen, however, that qualities construed as masculine were praiseworthy only if they were displayed along with characteristics that could be called feminine: Osborn transgressed here, for she offered no sweetness, delicacy, maternal feeling, coyness, or whatever along with her firmness, heroism, and adventure. This can be seen as the reflection of a wish to keep man-made art distinct from that made by women (and not only distinct, but distinctly better), which, as women artists became not only more in evidence and greater in number but more skilled and inventive, seemed more and more urgent to the establishment.

Gender-based characteristics were applied to style and to subject, and it seems to have been the case, by and large, that masculinity of style was to be praised in a woman's work, but masculinity of subject was not. In the same way, femininity of style was often regretted in women's work, while femininity of subject was extolled. That what was masculine or feminine, in style or subject, was not fixed, became more and more evident as the period went on, but traditions linger: an examination of women's work in the period, genre by genre, will serve to illustrate how much, and how, tradition and innovation (and expectation and reality) engaged, both in general and specific terms. To give a brief indication of what the pattern that emerges will be, the first exhibition of the Society of Female Artists included the following numbers of items, broken down by genre: 108 landscapes, 55 flower or fruit pieces, 50 portraits, 37 copies, 9 animal pictures, 14 sculptures (leaving 85 works which by title alone, cannot with confidence be specified, but many of which would undoubtedly have been domestic, fancy and literary genre). This predominance of landscape continued at the Society, with the other genres specified here retaining a similar proportion (with the exception of copies and sculptures, which generally decreased in number).[17] This predominance of landscape was a general characteristic of the period (though this is masked by critical concentration on higher genres, it emerges in Graves' analysis of exhibiting performance in the period, and in a close examination of exhibition catalogues from the time), but is a particularly useful point to note with reference to female artists, since along with the other figures given, it forms a pattern which can be set against the range and abundance of subjects stereotypically ascribed to female artists; and set against the stereotyped perception of women artists' range and preference in subject and style, can be the Illustrated London News' critic's experience of the 1860 SFA show: "Of the three hundred odd works now exhibited about a third are copies from old masters; the rest comprise every range of subject, except the highest historic";[18] when the catalogue is consulted, this judgment is seen to be quite erroneous: of 319 works listed, 64

were described as copies, and the predominant genre (numbering at least 132 items) was, again, landscape. The inaccuracy of the reviewer's report, whether due to laziness, haste, or misinformation, is surely largely derived from stereotypical notions of 'female art'.

The genre categorisation followed in the rest of this chapter has been determined as the most illuminating of the work to be discussed: women's work in the period existed within the hierarchy of genres, of course, whereby epic or history painting was deemed most worthy, and still life least glorious, but the types which emerge within the work of female artists between 1850 and 1879 diverge from those that have been established by surveys of the period in general, (that is to say, surveys which almost exclusively consider male artists' work). Therefore, a different system of categorisation has been used from that usually found in discussions of Victorian art.

Copying

The Athenaeum's review of the SFA exhibition of 1857 (the first) picked out in concluding, the copies: "Some copies of the Old Masters, some so-so and others not so - make up an Exhibition which will improve, we feel sure, in other years." [19] The following year, the copies were remarked upon again: "... innumerable copies of old masters, some looking older than the masters, some much younger..." [20]. In response to the 1860 Exhibition, the same critic wrote on the same topic: "It will be a good time, too, when the ladies committee can dispense with copies. The skill of the sisterhood in reproduction demands no new praise or advertisement." [21] The following year, his remarks could run: "the ugly copies have totally vanished, and hideous transcripts from Correggio or Turner offend not the public eye on these walls. This is a relief." [22] Copying was a part of the education of the artist, but where women artists were concerned was problematic, if critical responses are to be

trusted. Not only the Athenaeum's critic, but others too, regularly bewailed the fact that the Society of Female Artists allowed copies on its walls: that women not only did the copies in such number, but exhibited them too, was seen as a mark of wrongheadedness and misplaced ideas. Other, mixed, shows did either not allow or not encourage copies on their walls, implying that copies were seen to be more a part of the female artist's practice than the male's, although this fact was evidently not considered a happy one.

Copying works by other artists was, of course, a practice which was approved in academic education, a reproductive skill being not only encouraged but rewarded: one of the annual awards in the Academy Schools was for the best copy, and visual evidence of students learning from the old masters abounds (fig.56). As far as academic education was concerned, its authority for encouraging the student to copy came from as high as Reynolds.[23] Ruskin, too, encouraged his 'pupils' to copy at length.[24] Thus, in the biographies of many of the artists of the period, not only the female ones, a comment such as the following is found:

> "She learnt drawing as a child from her father, copying engravings by Albert Durer, or after Michael Angelo and Raphael. Subsequently she showed talent for drawing portraits and was assisted by George Richmond, RA, who lent her some of his portraits to copy, and employed her also for the same purpose." 25

In the same vein, some artists continued to copy as a learning process even after they had created original work: this seems to be the point, however, where the men and the women part company. Bodichon, for instance, made original pictures from 1850, but her albums include copies - from Corot, Turner, Descamps, Brabazon and others (figs.179/81 & fig. 8) dated between 1856 and 1876, and as late as 1864 she placed herself under the tuition of Corot, whose teaching method consisted largely in having pupils copy from his own work, as, indeed, did many

artist-teachers'.[26] But, since,in the first place, copying was justified as learning from a chosen model, it was seen as a step towards original work, and as long as one copied one had not, it was assumed, reached the stage of complete confidence in one's own originality, was not a mature artist. Thus, copied works exhibited were seen to be standing in for a lack of complete originality, and critics had little time for them in exhibition reviews, being interested rather in finished creations sent down from the high peak where sat the artist, not nudged forward from the nursery slopes where squatted the student. The female artist seems to have been much slower than the male, by and large, to reach that point. That copying - whether it be the straightforward imitation of another artist's work, or, as in the case of flower and fruit painting or portraiture, a reproduction of real appearances - had such a conspicuous part to play in women's art, is more reflective of the fact that they were not expected to produce original works of merit, than of their actually lacking the capacity to do so. For there were women in the period who produced original work so meritorious that its worth could not be denied, but time and time again that merit was ascribed to a genius other than their own: almost invariably a male genius, given the alleged impossibility of an independent female creativity. A reference to another artist could, of course, be a compliment as well as it could be an aspersion: when Joanna Boyce's "La Veneziana" (1861) (fig. 14) was likened to a Bellini by the Saturday Review's critic or said by the Critic's reviewer to remind, "not alone in costume, of the grand Venetian times", the intention was to praise her work: when, however, Ward's "The Tower, ay, the Tower" (1864) was said by the Saturday Review's critic to resemble in the figure of Edward Paul Delaroche's version of the same subject, the intention was to criticise her picture.[27] It is no wonder that many female artists never had the confidence to raise themselves above the level of copying, and a shame that many tried to reach that much-vaunted level without the necessary resources.[28]

But, it is not as if any women artists - or even, in fairness,

the majority of the women artists of the period - were fit only for imitation of other artists' works: the Art Journal's comment on the copies at the Society of Female Artists 1860 exhibition read:

> "The number of works is 319, of which more than fifty are copies, some of them so well executed that it is a cause of regret their authors should exert such powers on imitations. Indeed, the time will come when this Society, in justice to themselves, must reject copies." 29

While the Athenaeum critic picked out a copy from the 1859 show by a Mrs. J. Needham, in the following terms:

> "Amongst other creditable copies is that of Turner's 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' by Mrs. Needham, a thing almost as evanescent and difficult to copy as a rainbow ; that no artist is quick enough to bring down - even on an April day that is zoned with thirty consecutive rainbows"; 30

and Mary Severn's copy of Borgogne's "Virgin with Saint Catherines" in the Lancashire Cotton Relief Fund Exhibition at Suffolk Street in 1863 was described by the Saturday Review critic as "a most beautiful copy, full of feeling and power" [31]; and Ruskin avowed, of Isabella Jay, an amateur whom he encouraged, that "such copies as hers are much more valuable and instructive possessions than the original drawings of second-rate artists" (fig.182) [32]; and the work of Cecilia Lucy Brightwell, a copier in engraving, was praised by her master John Sell Cotman thus: "... her copy of Rembrandt's 'Mill' is most astonishingly etched and more like Rembrandt than anything I have ever seen", while a modern writer recalled her copy of a watercolour by John B. Crome in Norwich Castle Museum as "much superior to the original." [33] Brightwell was one of the women for whom copying could be turned to good account, as a professional art-form. That there was such a market for copies, in the period, made copying a necessity, but from the artistic point of view, to be content to be a copyist was to settle for something

much less than being an artist. Given this thinking, a woman should seem an appropriate apprentice to professional copying. Eliza Sharpe was employed by the South Kensington Museum to copy their works, including the Raphael cartoons; Magdalene Ross Dalton copied her brother William Ross' miniatures as part of her work as Miniature Painter to the Queen; numerous women were engaged by Ruskin on copying for the Arundel Society (notably Mrs. Higford Burr) and the Guild of St. George (fig. 80); Severn's copies from Greek antiquities were used to illustrate her husband Charles Newton's lectures and to illustrate his written treatises on the subject (fig. 20). [34] Women were also active in copying by steel-engraving etching and photography, at different points within the mid-century period. [35]

To return, however, to the copies of paintings and drawings (and, infrequently, statuary) which women who meant to be artists engaged upon. Copying a work by another artist, apart from its educational benefits, obviated the need to invent and select a subject to which one felt equal, since the second artist was, to a large degree, borrowing the first artist's ability to deal successfully with the subject. Given that, the work to be copied still had to be chosen from a vast range of works which were presented as good examples to emulate. The artists that women who showed at the Society of Female Artists copied in greatest number included such predictable masters as Turner, Rubens, Raphael, Van Dyck and Teniers. The copyist did not necessarily choose the famous artist's greatest or most celebrated work: the choice must often have been determined by such prosaic grounds as availability and accessibility, fashion, or the predilections of a drawing-master or other advisor such as one can see Ruskin was. Thus, Raphael was a favourite model: religious subjects were generally frequent among copies because of the academic hierarchy by which Raphael was an eternal exemplar of great art, and the Italian Renaissance artists of the period which was seen to culminate in him, were prominent in public collections in this country, and their subject-matter was, of course, predominantly religious. [36] In this way, in the second

SFA show, for instance, out of 79 exhibited copies (see table), those taken from Raphael included "Angels" (J. Williams), "The holy Family" (Annie Pye), "Virgin, child and John" (Matilda Cook), "Holy Family" (Alice C. Blyth), "La belle Vierge" (Mme. Greata). There was evidently as well a taste for religious subject-matter, of a sentimental nature, which was independent of art-historical values, for among copyists of Claude and Murillo and Reynolds, religious subjects were often chosen, although these artists offer examples of other genres equally commendable as models.

Some women consistently chose the same artists to copy, and it followed in such a case sometimes that she was making a consistent choice in subject also, and sometimes her own eventual work lay in the same field. For instance, one Salia Brooker showed in the 1858 SFA show, two Turner copies and an original work called "Venice"; Constance Fripp, later to make landscape her speciality, showed in the same exhibition two copies of Wynants landscapes.[37]

Side by side with this methodicalness, however, is the curious tendency to copy works which were quite unrelated in subject and genre and, often, to the artist's own work which she might show alongside her copies. This habit, which certainly prevailed among the copyists of the Society of Female Artists, produced such unwieldy packages as, for instance, Mrs. Penny's "Sunset" after Barratt, "The artist's first wife and child" after Rubens, and "The Coronation of the Virgin" after Correggio (1858); or Marian Harrison's "In the park, St. Cloud", "Lane Scene", "A Plate of fruit", and "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" after Turner (1857).[38] This surely indicates the eclecticism of the beginner - moreover, of the untutored or ill-directed beginner - to whose mill any reputed artist is grist. Women new to exhibition seem to have preferred to make their entry tentatively, rather than risk themselves from the first with original work, many women at the SFA showing copies in their first year(s) of exhibition, but not necessarily continuing to do so. Each year of the Society's exhibition there would have been some artists for whom that was the first time of exhibiting,[39] which meant

that there was always likely to be some artist(s) who wished to appear under cover of Rubens, Raphael, Reynolds, Murillo, or whomever, before venturing out under their own colours. The incidence is high, too, of artists at the Society offering one or two original works backed up or padded out with images borrowed from other artists: thus, for instance, E.M. Allen showed a Romney copy, a Murillo copy and her own "Erin's Daughter" in 1858; Margaret Backhouse sent five original water-colours and a Reynolds copy to the 1857 show; Ellen Blackwell exhibited her own "Bouquet from Moel Wynne" and a copy of Claude's "Annunciation" in 1858; Mary Bleaden was represented in 1858 by her own "Spring", "Bridge at the Powdermills, Ewell" and a Greuze copy.[40]

It should not be assumed that the models women chose were necessarily sanctioned by age-old status: they chose to copy their contemporaries, also - though not, to any marked degree, their female contemporaries. This need not be surprising when it is reflected upon that one's teacher lending their own works to copy would be, more often than not, male; and the only active female artist of the time to have enough status and enough availability to become a possible model was Carpenter, whose work was mostly portraiture, which is of limited use to the copyist, because of its specificity. It is surprising, though, that among old exemplars Kauffmann was not more popular among female copyists than the exhibitions would suggest. The modern artists that the exhibitions rather show to be the most popular with women copying include Landseer, Fielding, Reinagle, and Mulready. Modern artists, however, were not copied to anything like the extent that deceased artists were. Of relevance here, but impossible through lack of evidence to evaluate, is the question of whether a copy was made for educational purposes or for sale. The copies exhibited at the SFA shows might well have been executed in a combination of these tow spirits, whichever being the more dominant influencing the choice of model. An exemplar which was educationally beneficial to copy might, of course, however, also be a good prospect for sale (e.g. Reynolds'

pieces or Raphael and Murillo religious subjects).

The question of copying was such an issue for women artists because, as it has been said, of their situation as regards expectations and self-confidence; because of their educational situation; and, interwoven with both of these, notions of women lacking invention. The feeling among critics seems to have been that women had the role of copying quite out of proportion, yet other arbiters of the female artist's situation never ceased to recommend copying to her as a means of improvement, whether that model were the work of other artists or the work of nature: the basic facility she needed to develop was reproduction based on imitation.[41] The confusion of the role of copying in any artist's activities, though, is indicated by this passage from an anonymous article on "The Education of the Artist" in the New Quarterly Review of 1861, where the writer confidently asserted two contradictory notions: "To copy pictures, or to imitate well-known statues, will make nothing more than a decent mechanic. Great deeds are inspired by great examples."[42] Wome were encouraged to become "decent mechanics", which they did, more and more as the period proceeded; they were not always educated enough to do "great deeds". Ruskin, for instance, in his teaching of women, cultivated their mechanical skills but neglected their creative thinking; and he, like many in an influential position, firmly believed for a long time, and even in the face of evidence to the contrary, that"great deeds" were an impossibility for them,[43] so that the summit of a woman artist's achievements would most probably be an excellent copy. This was a giving with the one hand and a taking away with the other, which makes the question of copying an issue for female artists; it is a process, too, which one finds operating in other genres.

Still life

There is a well-established tradition that still life, in particular the portrayal of flowers and plants, is especially a woman's province. "Fruits and flowers seem by divine appointment the property of ladies", declared the Art Journal's review of the 1868 Society of Female Artists exhibition [44]; as late as 1883, an article in the Magazine of Art, entitled "Flowers and Flower-Painters", began: "It seems little short of heretical to attempt to destory the association between Women and Flowers, when their resemblance in nature and aspect have been sung and celebrated for centuries" and continued, suggesting the complexities of the question:

> "Many women are impelled to believe seriously that, because they are women, they must have an innate comprehension, a special instinct, which helps them to a right interpretation of floral mystery and beauty. They are encouraged as well by much talk of the dignity and sanctity of women's work, and a half-scornful belief that 'surely anyone almost can paint flowers'". [45]

The inference here, that still-life painting is accessible to even the greenest amateur, and is at the same time particularly suitable for women to practise, makes evident again the axiomatic synonymity between women artists and amateurs. That still-life did, in fact, have this connotation comes to light in the numbers of women who, from their brief or erratic appearances in the gallery, evidently had no great nor sustained ambition in art, and showed flower studies or 'bits' of nature, and in the equally numerous women who showed still lives as their early or first exhibited works. The sentimental associations between women and nature, or more precisely between women and flowers, had practical counterparts to cement the relationship between the two, in that the raw materials for fruit and flower painting are eminently available to a person working in a domestic environment, which most women did even had they espoused an artistic profession; in

that still-life prioritises the skills of imitation (which it has been shown were deemed within women's grasp) and colouring (which appeals to the traditional notion of women's sensitivity), which - rather than the skills of invention and composition - would make it a more accessible genre to the under-educated and ill-treated woman artist of the 1850's than to her educated and instructed male contemporary; also, still-life is a genre which can be effectively practised on a small scale and in watercolour: modesty both of scale and medium being the more practicable and 'suitable' for the woman artist. Still-life is also, according to academic tradition, a lowly genre, and this form of modesty, too, was considered suitable to the woman artist.[46] These characteristics bring with them certain issues which bear very strongly on the achievements of women within the genre. These can be explored to start with through the examples of the two women who were generally thought to be the best female practitioners of the genre, Martha and Annie Mutrie (figs. 183/6).

The Art Journal critic was only expressing a generally accepted view when he wrote in 1861:

> "... we turn with pleasure to those (fruits and flowers) presented for the public pleasure and instruction by the misses Mutrie... Miss A.F. Mutrie... must give way to her elder sister, as all other flower painters who exhibit must give way to both." [47]

The reception which the Mutries habitually received from critics reflects some generally held expectations of the genre. Annie Mutrie's "Orchids" at the Academy in 1855 were "not mere transcripts of Nature, but fine truthful idealisations" [48]; Martha Mutrie's "Camellias" and "Garden Flowers" were "so good that to name her is to praise her. We should like to see her try landscape." [49] The inferior nature of the genre is expressed by the idea, that, in the first case, Annie has outdone the expectations of such a work, and, in the second, Martha is wasting her talents on such material. The genre relies on imitation, the subject serving as a vehicle to demonstrate the

artist's ability to capture physical appearances; the merits of works within the genre must therefore depend on the artist's talent for copying, and provides scant space for other skills that might compensate for less-than-perfect imitative talent. Either a still-life painter can make fruit and flowers look realistic, or they produce unsatisfactory, not to say, bad, pictures. Pictures which were very easily tedious, also. Women, aware that they were supposed to be equal to still-life, that it was assumed to be within their limited grasp, were also evidently aware of the narrow interest which the genre commanded, for one finds great imagination and sometimes desperate invention being called into play when titling still-life pictures. Obvious descriptive titles like "Fruit", "Still life with fruit and flowers", "Raspberries and Roses" were, of course, more than common: the exhibiting record of Eloise Stannard, for instance, reads as a monotonous list of "Fruits from nature", interspersed with "Fruit" and "Fruit with ..." (fig. 187), over 20 years. [50] But also common, especially as the number of practitioners of the genre increased with the generally expanding body of women artists, were the more ingenious - "Fresh gathered", and "Spring", "Summer" or "Autumn". The efforts of the painter to vary the context in which her flowers and fruit were presented, showed themselves in such titles as "Consider the lilies of the field", "Dew Drops", "Fresh from the Market", "Some of Flora's Gems", "A present from the Country" and "Greenhouse Gatherings". [51] The hint here that the simple and humble character of the genre is being aggrandised or elevated is made more explicitly evident in the attachment of a verse or literary tag to the picture, as in Mrs. J.F. Pasmore's 1873 "Ye field flowers, the gardens eclipse you, tis true, yet wildings of nature, I dote upon you"; Annie Mutrie's 1860 "Where the bee sucks..."; Mrs. Harrison's 1871 "Fair daffodils, we weep to see thee pass away so soon" with its title borrowed from Herrick, or Mrs. Marrable's 1871 "Spring hangs hesitant blossoms on the trees, Rocked in the cradle of the Western breeze." [52]

This effort to give the pictures more interest than the genre habitually commanded did not take critics' attention away from the

simple technical demands that were made of such a simple subject area; when women's still life was found lacking, it was nearly always in a lack of naturalism or conviction, and those qualities deemed feminine were often picked upon as, seemingly, not suitable for subject-matter vaunted as so feminine. Thus,

> "Mrs. Duffield, always a skilful painter of flowers, sends several examples, but they are all in the style of what flowers would be if painted for a young lady's album, and suggest cardboard and a palette full of bright colour, which yet is not somehow good colour." 53

The vocabulary used by critics appreciative of the two Mutries implies that, in fact, those qualities which fell traditionally into the masculine category were the secret of their success:

> "The firmness of manner, powerful colour, and natural condition and circumstances characterising the works of this lady (Martha Mutrie), are refreshing to those wearied with the everlasting prim drawing-room arrangements that prevails (sic) among our flower-painters"

> "It is seldom that we see flowers painted in oil with so much vigour, accurate drawing, good colour, and decided manipulation." 54

Even late in the mid-century period, the same elements played to the same effect: the genre so promoted as a feminine one, actually required masculine qualities, in critical eyes, if it was to be a success of any consequence: the subject here is a work by Helen Allingham of 1879:

> "... a little bit of nature, very evidently touched by a woman's hand, full of delicate beauty, and that softly modified truth a woman delights in, not the coarse, blunt unadulterated truth of man. A little small, perhaps, and somewhat trivial, but fresh and green as springtime itself." 55

As the critic himself,concludes, femininity results in "trivial" work whereas the "firmness" and "vigour" of the two Mutries produced works which could be praised without apology: the explicit combination of the best of what was feminine with an approved masculinity, in the Mutries' work, is made quite clear, (though it is not debated at all) by critical comments such as: "There is a ladylike poetry about every touch, yet without feebleness or weakness"... "... painted with the usual skill: a combination of force and delicacy, which characterises all the works of this accomplished lady." [56] Not surprisingly, then, Annie Mutrie's "Fruit" at the Academy in 1851, was declared by the Art Journal's reviewer to be "the most successful essay in this department of art that we have ever seen from the hand of a lady." [57]

The competition between the feminine and the masculine showed itself in still life, also in the way in which, though the Mutries were usually unparalled ("Miss A.F. Mutrie's flowers appear to us the very 'roof and crown' of flower-painting") [58], lesser women practising the genre were habitually compared to male models, assumed to be the best: these took the forms of George Lance and William Henry Hunt: "Mrs. Margetts, Mrs. Harrison, and Mrs. Harris are excellent in flowers and still-life at the New gallery, and so is Mr. Rosenberg at the Old: but of course they all yield to Mr. Hunt"; ".. the fruit-piece and nest of Misses J. and A. Childs - beautifully rich in colour, and as near the excellence of Hunt's studies as any of a similar kind"; "... Just below it is a table of "Fruit" by Mrs. Harrison, which George Lance might envy"; "We are attracted by a singularly clever little picture, "Studies from Nature" by Jane Benham. For minute fidelity and finish it approaches very nearly to George Lance's masterpieces." [59] The contradiction between the traditionally feminine character of fruit and flower painting and the assumed pre-eminence of male practitioners of the genre, was not debated by those critics who expressed the warring ideas in their comments on women's work. An appreciation in the Spectator's review of the Dudley exhibition of 1870, of the exhibits by Helen Coleman (Angell) explains why Coleman's work was so well-liked by critics (she could be seen as a watercolourist equal to the

Mutries, in critical esteem) but does not manage - does not try - to explicate the contradictions between, not only the masculine and feminine in the genre's practice, but also the imitative and inventive. The passage is long, but is worth quoting in full for its discussion of these points:

> "Miss Helen Coleman has from the first been distinguished by a style of her own (fig. 58). William Hunt has been followed by a long tail of imitators, who with scarcely an exception have missed the greatest excellence of their original; for while often displaying considerable skill in detailed imitation, they have for the most part been entirely innocent of the breadth of treatment which Hunt himself so passionately sought after. Thus it is that we have been inundated with strawberries lying on a dirty bank, apples backed by lumps of moss, etc, etc, and at last we have begun to wonder what it was that we so admired in Hunt, till we see perchance a work by Hunt himself, and are reminded that the charm of it consisted not only in his unsurpassed power of realisation, but also, in a greater degree, in the breadth of treatment which compelled every detail to form part of a whole, and secured the prime qualities of unity, sobriety, and repose. Now it is breadth of treatment that is the chief merit of Miss Coleman's drawings, and wheras Hunt aimed at brilliance and force of colour, she is all for tenderness..." 60

The distinction between allegedly masculine and allegedly feminine qualities lurks here, and the dichotomy of imitation and originality, but the specifics remained confusing, especially for the women whose work was consistently either praised or blamed: where were they going right or wrong? Generalisations about women's work did not help to clarify the matter: of Miss A. Jenkins' "Study of Fruit" (1870), the Athenaeum critic wrote:

> "(this work is) vigorous and broad. Qualities such as these are often found in ladies' works which have still life for their subjects; also great feeling for composition, and gleams of a precious sense of colour. It must be owned, however, that such fine elements of art rarely

> obtain in the hands of more ambitious female painters, who devote themselves to pathetic and humorous themes." 61

By 1870, the level of flower-and fruit painting among women had, through the example of the Mutries and others, risen - the Art Journal had commented in 1864: "So earnest now is the competition in fruit and flower painting, that this department has attained to a degree of excellence far beyond what might have been augured of it in years gone by." [62] - and the numbers of women attempting "pathetic and humorous themes" had swollen, but without a corresponding rise in achievement. In fact, for all its lowliness, still-life produced many very accomplished female painters in the period, if critical appraisal is to be trusted in the face of a frequent absence of actual visual evidence; accomplished women, however, were persistently characterised as exceptions to the rule of weak still-life painters, although the exceptions became challengingly numerous as the period continued. Some of them were: Charlotte James:

> "Charlotte James has a way of treating flowers and fruits which escapes the usual routine of gaudy show. She can throw too the petal and the deep flower cup into persepctive, and her tendrils aand leafy sprays flow in grace unrestrained. The flowers she paints are happy in the air they breathe." 63

Caroline Eastlake: "Miss Eastlake is entitled to special commendation: her productions mainfest ability, taste and industry are conscientious transcripts of nature, wrought with exceeding care and skill" [64] (fig.188); Mrs. William Duffield (Mary Elizabeth Rosenberg): "This artist has a true sense of the spontaneous growth and the wild grace of nature", "..The widow of Mr. Duffield is one of our best flower painters" [65] (fig. 189); Mary Harrison: "Grapes and flowers were never better painted in watercolours than these" ("Grapes" and "A Jug of Flowers")..."Very fresh are the flowerpieces of Mrs. Mary Harrison; who, we think, has more sentiment of the loveliness of flowers than any of her

competitors." [66] (fig.36). Despite such individual encomiums, the genralising that was the bane of the female artist persisted, for the rank and file:

> "That almost characteristic lack of 'solid' workmanship which is too frequently obvious in the drawings of the ladies, and the entirely characteristic taste, feeling, and delicacy of touch of a true female artist, with good colour, appear in Miss R. Place's 'Camellias and Indian Vase'".

The Athenaeum's critic found it possible to write thus in 1869. [69]

A mention should be made of the role of the family connection in still life painting and drawing, for a number of the women who distinguished themselves in the genre belonged to 'still-life families'. Mary Harrison had two daughters who took up her genre (only Maria gained any distinction) [68]; Eliza Lance inherited the genre from her father, George ("He has left a daughter who paints in her father's style", wrote Sarah Tytler in 1874) [69]; Coleman came from a family of still-life painters, including a brother, William, and a father, (at least); three women of the Norwich Stannard family achieved distinction in the painting of both fruit and game. Mary Ann Rosenberg married into the genre, when she became Mrs. William Duffield, though Clayton suggests that she was already inclined to the genre:

> "From childhood Miss Rosenberg showed a profound love of flowers. When she reached the age of fifteen, she had formed a rather extensive herbarium. This taste caused her father to train the young lady as a flower painter. Oddly enough, out of the five of his children who lived to become artists, this daughter was the only one principally known in that branch of art which he practised least himself;" [70]

this account neglects Mrs. Duffield's two sisters, Frances Elizabeth Louisa (fig.190), (who also married into the genre, taking John

Dafter Harris as her husband) and Ellen, and likewise, her two neices, Ethel and Gertrude, all of whom also worked in the genre, though to various effect: all using watercolour, the compositions of Frances and Mary Ann seem, from available evidence, to be more sensitive than those of Ellen, whose handling is also less delicate than her sisters'.

One woman painter of flowers practised the genre in a way different from any that have been so far mentioned: this was Marianne North, who treated it as a scientific study. Unlike Ruskin and his protegées, for North the careful and respectful study of nature was not undertaken in order to produce great art, but in order to increase knowledge: the works' aim would be to inform, not to inspire. For this reason, she was treated critically as an amateur:

> "In conclusion, we can only say of Miss North's work, that it is exactly the sort of work which an amateur should do. It is earnest and painstaking and industrious, and it has a clear, indisputable worth, in making known facts about a foreign country, in a most pleasant and intelligible manner." 71

The Dictionary of National Biography records, however, that she had something of an artist's training:

> "She had a strong love of music, and at an early age took to painting flowers. She was trained in singing by Madame Sainton-Dolby, but the failure of a fine voice led her to devote herself entirely to painting. After a stay on the continent from 1847 to 1850, she took some lessons in flower-painting, from a Miss van Foweinkel and from Valentine Bartholomew." 72

Her industry in the course of her work was truly Ruskinian, however: she made several trips abroad with her father, for the purpose of recording the flora and phenomena of foreign countries during the '50's and '60's, and on his death, she

"resolved to carry out an old project for painting the flora of more remote countries. Between July 1871 and June 1872 she visited Canada, the United States, and Jamaica. Later in the same summer she started for Brazil, where she spent much of her time drawing in a remote forest hut." 73

Subsequent trips included travel in Tenerife, California, Java, Japan, Borneo, Ceylon and India. She began to paint in watercolour, but took up oil exclusively after 1864. She associated with Edward Lear and Henry Hunt, among others, in comparison with whose works hers can be seen to concern themselves unashamedly with the minutiae of the flower, shrub or tree, which is put into context by a landscape background which, however, is given very little picture space. The artistic merit of her works is uneven, the variety occurring more in composition and organisation of images than in handling, but her colours are nearly always charming and interesting, and the forms clear; now and then, a hint of the sentimental anthropomorphism of her day creeps in to distract, and occasionally a figure or human habitation is included in a very obvious, scale-giving way, (fig.191). She had her works exhibited in London in 1879, and caused them to be arranged at Kew Gardens in 1882, permanently exhibited in a gallery especially built to house them; they remain there today.

North's use of the genre is interesting, because it contrasts with the equally unaesthetic use of flowers and fruit made by the 'Language of Flowers' artist or the ornamental designer. [74] The fine art flower-painter, however, made similar specialities of a particular area of the subject as North did. A painter might be known for a particular species - Mary (Mrs.) Harrison was known as 'the rose and primrose painter', Martha Mutrie was called by one critic "the Rosa Bonheur of Azaleas" [75] - or confine themselves to a certain set of fruits or blossoms - both Eloise and Emily Stannard tended to include grapes, pineapple and exotic fruits in their compositions, (figs. 192/3). By contrast, the specimens which a beginner might favour are indicated by manual and books of hints for amateurs as being such humble examples as the heartsease, poppy, ivy, moss-rose and fuchsia, [76] or the primrose, escholtzia, yellow crocus,

geranium, rose and convulvulus. This latter range comes from Mrs. Duffield's "The Art of Flower-Painting" published in 1856. [77] It was evidently popular, for it was in its eighth edition by 1871, (figs. 194/5). The orchid, camellia or cactus (all recurrent in the Mutries' repertoire) were presumably for the more ambitious. The limitations put on women's selection within the genre - a genre which, it is to be remembered, was repeatedly characterised as a woman's genre - are tellingly conjured up by Philip Hamerton in the essay which has already been quoted here, "Painting as a polite amusement", published in 1862; he writes:

> "... though wild landscape and the figure are equally forbidden to ladies, there are one or two minor branches of art which might be followed without offending the susceptibilities of the most decorous parents. There are birds, including poultry, if the young lady happens to be a poultry-fancier. There are dogs, too, and flowers. One may study blackbirds and thrushes from the life without outraging the most sensitive delicacy. S Scotch terriers, too, though never so faithfully represented, need hurt nobody's feelings; and Landseer has shown what capital pictures may be made of them. Of flowers, there are the favourites of the garden and the greenhouse; but I must warn the reader that the rich mountain foregrounds are inaccessible to ladies. Here, again, society interposes between Nature and her worshipper." 78

Hamerton's caustic advice explains succintly how come - even at the end of the period - many of the still-life works made by women consisted of arrays of cut blooms and plucked fruits disposed in vases, on tables and window-ledges, with significantly blank backgrounds or conspicuously domestic settings; when their attempts at expanding or elevating the genre were greeted by such comments as the Art Journal's reviewer snubbing Eloise Stannard's 1864 "By the Old Garden Wall" (fig. 192) with "this painter spoils excellent work by a mistaken attempt at grandiose composition;" [79], it is unsurprising that their ambitions for the genre which was supposed to be theirs became somewhat confused. Even an excellent

still-life painter, however, could never, because of the established hierarchy of genres, be seen as a great artist. In critical writings, the still-life nearly always came last, jockeying for position with landscape and miscellanea and oddities that the writer found more of an embarrassment than a treat. As a genre, its position and treatment thus parallel rather bitter-sweetly the situation and treatment of the mid-Victorian female artist, giving its traditional link with the women artist rather an ironical appropriateness.

Animal and bird painting

From nature morte to nature vivante, of a sort: Hamerton suggested that flowers, fruit, animals and birds could all be lumped together as far as the female artist was concerned. This may be the case, in that all those subjects were considered much of a muchness in terms of the hierarchy of genres, but they are very different in their accessibility to women. Just as flower-painting was construed as feminine, animal painting was dubbed masculine, despite the example of Bonheur, who was the irresistible model for any woman painting animals in the period. It is not insignificant that much was made by commentators of her wearing trousers, having her hair short, and remaining unmarried [80]: the feminine painter might portray pet dogs or donkeys in the field next door, but she would not be concerned to frequent cattle-markets and farmyards. Indeed, the incidence of animal painting or drawing in the period, among British women artists, is higher in domestic and anecodotal depictions than in naturalistic treatments. Thus, pictures with titles such as "The Toy Monkey" (Emily Farmer, 1865), "Dancing with Fido" (Mary Gibbs, 1871?), (fig. 196), "The pet Goldfinch" (Henriette Browne, 1875), "Two little Monkeys" (Elizabeth Murray, 1861), (fig. 95), and "Pretty Puss" (Georgina Swift, 1873) [81] are frequent, but the artists who took up animal or bird painting from a Landseer- or Bonheur-like position, are small in number. This is not surprising, as Hamerton implies: the domestic setting was not only more available to women than were the farmyard or mountain slopes or wild

forests, but was more in line with their own usual experience of animal life than was the huntin', shootin' and fishin' heroicism of Landseer or the rustic earthiness of Bonheur. A look at the work of those few women in the period who did identify themselves as animal or bird artists, will serve to convey the differing positions a woman artist could establish within the genre.

Emily Desvignes' primary concern with animals is quite apparent from a list of her exhibited works at the Academy, Suffolk Street and the British Institution: nearly every work was entitled "Sheep", sometimes with a modifying phrase, such as "Sheep, evening" or "A group of Sheep".[82] She inherited the genre from her father, Herbert Desvignes (who, however, condescended to favour cattle also with his attentions), with whom she lived throughout her exhibiting career. In the absence of any surviving examples of her work having been located, one can conclude from Clayton's account of her oil paintings that they belonged rather to a Linnell or Palmer mode than to a Landseer or Bonheur mode: "Her pictures are quietly and tenderly drawn, with much mellowness of colour and delicate play of light, always finished with care."[83]

Jemima Wedderburn (she became Blackburn in 1849) tried a much more vigorous relationship with her subject matter. Her exhibited titles included "Phaeton" (RA 1848, SFA 1857), "Plough-horses startled by a railway engine" (RA 1849), "The ram in the thicket" (SFA 1858) and "The Lost Sheep" (RA 1863); while critical descriptions of her "Scene on the Coast of Ayrshire" (SFA 1857)[84] show the bold setting and treatment which she tended to give her animals in her paintings: the Illustrated London News responded thus:

> "'A Scene on the Coast of Ayrshire' by Mrs. Blackburn, is truth itself; there is no doubt of this being painted from nature with the resolute will neither to adorn nor to alter it. We have the cold, snowy hills; the black furrow of the field; the bleak castle a la Wolf's crag, and a winter sun sending a chill light over the landscape, which is enlivened by a capital pair of plough horses, done with great care of drawing and felicity of colour." 85

While the Art Journal was more reserved (and used a different title):

> "Mrs. Blackburn's "Ploughing on the Coast of Ayrshire" would be a most excellent picture had not the artist fallen into the error of making it too heavy in colour. The subject is well-composed, well drawn, and is treated with much poetic feeling. In her endeavour to realise this latter quality she has evidently been led into a fault which tends to destroy the interest of her work." 86

The Spectator described the picture as "black and rude" but a "strong solemn transcript of nature". [87] Her treatment of animals and birds became, however, more celebrated in graphic form: her first drawings appeared in 1847, etchings for "The White Cat" and "Fortunio", and her "Animals in Scripture", published in 1853, brought praise from sources as diversely expert as Landseer and Ruskin. In 1858, "Scenes from Animal Life and Character" was published; in 1862 and 1868, "Birds drawn from Nature"; while her drawings appeared as illustrations to various writers' works, and plates from her published collections appeared in periodicals (for example, plates from "Animals in Scripture" appeared in Good Words between 1860 and 1864), (fig.197). Much later in life, she published "Drawing for Beginners" (1893) and "Birds from Moidart" (1895), (fig.198). [88]

The artist professed to be most influenced by Thomas Bewick's work, but her drawings have a very different character from his, the forms appearing much larger in the picture space and accompanied by more 'human interest', whether in the form of figures or background detail; her line, too, is more precise, and, in fact, the adjective Preraphaelite might not come amiss where some of her pieces are concerned: she was associated with Ruskin, who took an interest in her work from 1849 - he wrote to her at this time: "You are capable of great things... I think you might paint Dante if you chose..." [89] - and, from some critical writing a sense of Preraphaelitism comes through:

> "Mrs. Blackburn: 'Sea-gull's Nest'... this is an admirable work: yet it is placed literally beyond the range of unassisted sight. Every detail is elaborate without pettiness: the crinkled extremities of the ferns, the rippled sea, the bluebells and primroses. The varied sweep of the flying gull's wing is extremely fine and full of quiet mastery. The colour is objectionably dim, but true in its relations"
>
> "'The scene on the coast of Ayrshire", by Mrs. Blackburn, though hard and rather vulgar in manner, is curious from the strange Pre-Raphaelite character of the landscape..." 90

There is no evidence, however, to indicate that she thought of herself as belonging to that school, or that she tried to enter into it, despite her relations with Ruskin; Clayton describes her training:

> "In her earlier studies, Miss Wedderburn never drew from nature, but learned the structure and shape of the animal as thoroughly as she could be observation, and then drew it from memory in every variety of attitude, and from different points of view. This practice of memory was subsequently of great use in sketching groups in action, or scenes in travelling, which there was no chance of doing on the spot. When she first began to draw from an object, she found much difficulty. However, to overcome this, she practised a good deal, taking portraits of animals at rest, and studies of various points. But it must be said that this artist has always carefully avioded the practice (traces of which may perhaps be detected in some animal painters) of posing a dead animal in some studied attitude, and attempting to portray it as a living one, or tying some creature in a constrained position, such as having a horse's foot held up, and making a transcript to represent it as if freely and naturally using its own muscles." 91

The experience needed to achieve a naturalism in animal or bird

painting was as important as the technical skill necessary for the same end, and it was recognised that such experience was not ordinarily easily available to women; reviews of a Miss Lefroy's 1864 Society of Female Artists exhibit "The floodless wilds..." indicate this:

> "Miss Lefroy's snowy mountain scene with deer, 'The floodless wilds pour forth their brown inhabitants", shows admirable knowledge of the animals represented in their forms and attitudes. The composition of this picture is remarkably good"
>
> "'The floodless wilds pour forth their brown inhabitants', Miss Lefroy, is the title of a picture showing a herd of deer passing over a snowy waste; this may be thought a difficult subject for a lady, but really the animals are correctly drawn and spiritedly painted." 92

Thus, a woman who achieved naturalism and conviction in her portrayals of animals and birds was perhaps overpraised: this may have been the case for Augusta Withers, whose forte was farmyard birds (fig. 69) - an easier prospect than wild deer or plough-horses, anyway - :

> "... in this class, the watercolours of a lady with whose name we had not yet been familiar, Mrs. Withers, stand supreme. These are not only the best here, but would be extra-ordinary anywhere. More literally, more completely, and more excellently felt in all its details than this lady's "Bantam Hen and Chickens", a subject of the same description cannot be; more perfectly characteristic, or more free from trick or exaggeration. Scarcely inferior are the "Canaries"; but we question the perspective of the bason. Her other five works contain charming qualities, all being painted solidly, without flashiness or flimsiness."
>
> "Mrs. Withers' "Study of Garden Rockwork, with Robin and Nest", is a remarkable specimen of textural execution - the various materials, animal, vegetable, and mineral, being admirably discriminated, and with a minuteness of elaboration which challenged the nicest criticism - and withal nothing obtrusive nor hard in the details." 93

Withers had the relationship to the genre which characterised the animal and bird painting of quite a few women painters of the period who gained some recognition but, because of the humble nature of the genre itself, made no great reputations: that is to say, she interspersed her animal and bird portrayals with other, still-life works of fruit, dead game, and so on, implying a common character among these subjects. Olive Newcomen (dogs, fowl, game, donkeys: "Miss Olive Newcomen paints with a wonderful fidelity a "Young Donkey" - doubtless a pet - as large as life, munching thistles and ruminating it a brown study and a sombre atmosphere"),[94]; Agnes Dundas (dogs, birds, game: "As a painter of animals and still life, Agnes Dundas is prominent among ladies: her dogs' heads and dead birds are worthy of high commendation")[95], and Lucette Barker (dogs), Mrs. Arthur Shirley (horses)[96], are among such artists.

Like fruit and flower painting, the depiction of animals and birds was of limited interest to the critic, and the exceptions only served to prove the rule: those exceptions were often foreign artists, among women, a circumstance which was admitted to be largely due to the better education in art which French women were thought to enjoy throughout the period. It was, interestingly, the sister of Bonheur, Mme. Juliette Peyrol, whose exhibits called forth this illuminating remark from the Art Journal's critic at the SFA show in 1864:

> "'A Hen and Chickens' by Mme. Peyrol (née Juliette Bonheur), of which it must be said that it is scarcely credible such a subject could be made so interesting; the picture is low in tone, and throughout wonderfully equal in softness of touch, yet withal spirited and full of life are the parti-coloured brood and their mother." 97

An English Bonheur, found by critics in Elizabeth Thompson, did not properly occur until after the period under discussion here, in the person of Luch Kemp-Welch[98]; rather, animal and bird painting within the mid-century, among women, was a matter of a few good practitioners, many good works - Rosa Brett's charming "Hayloft"

(1858), (fig. 199) and "Chicks" (1870), (fig. 200) and Joanna Boyce's "Leveret" (fig. 201) (undated), should be mentioned here - but no remarkably high achievement; even in 1876, Clayton could find only six female animal painters to discuss. [99]

Landscape

To landscape, however, women artists' commitment was considerable. It has already been pointed out that this was the predominating genre in the Society of Female Artists' exhibitions throughout the period, and landscapists were prominent among the women patronised by the Art Union prizewinners, while Clayton gave three times the number of animal painters in the landscape section of her book. [100] The Art Journal's review of the SFA show in 1865 observed that "there is a noble field open for landscape Art of high character to those Englishwomen who may not choose to meet the difficulties of study from the life." [101] Some women of the period proved this to be true, but many others proved by their work that the caustic note sounded by Hamerton with reference to other genres, and applied by him also to landscape, was equally valid:

> "The study of mountain foregrounds is not 'correct' for ladies, although extremely beneficial to their health. I once spent a month, and spent it very happily too, in a little wooden hut on a wild moor, that I might paint carefully from nature a beautiful foreground of heather; but all my friends thought me very odd and eccentric for doing so, nor did they consider that I was there for any serious purpose, but only out of whim or freak. Suppose some young lady, a daughter of one of the country gentlemen in the neighbourhood, had wished to paint the same subject (and remember there was no specimen of heather nearer than that, and you don't find heather in enclosed meadows and pastures), she would have had to make at least a hundred journeys between breakfast and lunch or between lunch and dinner, in order to accomplish what I did easily in thirty hard-working days of ten hours each. And when you think about the weather, and take into consideration the

> feelings of the young lady's friends (and country gentlemen have generally a crowd of acquaintances living in their houses when they are down in the country), you will see at once that no young lady could ever ride off to the hills a hundred days in one year, to paint a picture." 102

This introduces, by implication, the distinction made between historical landscape and what might better be called nature study; both the former, more prestigious, category of landscape painting and the latter, modest variety, are out of women's effective range, claims Hamerton, because of convention. While the greater standing of the historical or grand landscape, though challenged by Ruskinian attitudes to nature and the universality of Preraphaelite interest in nature, was vigorously maintained throughout the period, at the same time some attempt was made to assure women that 'their' form of landscape painting still had its own merits. An address to the Female School of Art by Professor Donaldson, in 1866, [103] illustrates this line of argument at eloquent length, not giving convention any consideration; first, the aggrandisement of nature study:

> "It is the privilege and glory of the artist to transfer upon the paper, the canvas, or the wall, or to embody in marble, brick, or stone, not 'the form of things unknown', but of objects already existing in nature, selecting those which are most noble or sublime, or most graceful and well proportioned. Whatever in expression is tender or full of feeling or passion; whatever in colour may be of soberest tone or most brilliant hue, combined and grouped in contrast or graceful harmony, recalling emotions and impressions already existing in the mind, are here brought together to produce delight, admiration, wonder, pity, or sympathy, as the subject may inspire, - with the like effect as poetry, but not by the same means.... in the homely scenes of Oxford Street and Piccadilly, and in the fields beyond Brompton, I have seen brilliant sunsets, that might well employ the pencil and glowing colours of a Claude or of a Turner."

Then, the explicit expression of the ideal features of landscape painting:

> "... whether among the counties of England, in the picturesque scenery of Devonshire, or the lakes of Cumberland.. among the lochs and wilds of Scottish scenery, or the terrible and graceful landscapes of Ireland, with its peasantry and their hovels... whether in the Alpine ranges of Switzerland, or the Tyrol; in the plains of Lombardy or the lagunes of Venice; in the valley of the Arno with proud Florence rising from its banks, and backed by the Appenines; or... Pompeii, Posilippe, and Gaeta, with all their wild and graceful associations of poetic lore. What artist can travel in such scenes, and not return rich in art memorials, sketches, and studies, if but endued with passion for the pursuit and with perseverance to increase his (sic) stores of reference."

The uselessness of such rhapodising for the majority of women interested in landscape painting, even in 1861, is testified to in one way by such reflections of popular prejudice as a short story in Chambers' Journal only five years earlier, called "Can't and Can, or Dare and Do" wherein the author urges women to have courage enough to take (for instance) a trip to the Highlands of Scotland without chaperones or other company ("You can't!" exclaimed wise mothers; "two girls can't go alone..." [104]) and in another way by the fact that Clayton, still a decade later than Donaldson's speech, though she describes eighteen landscapists, describes Harriet Gouldsmith as "the only one who gained any distinction", [105] (fig.202), and hence a modern writer can perpetuate that notion: Christopher Wood, in his Dictionary of Victorian Painters, calls her "One of the few nineteenth century women painters to gain any distinction in landscape painting." [106] However, on closer scrutiny of the period, this view is proved to be very arguable, and the Art-Journal's more optimistic comment to be worthy of note.

The case of Bodichon, already mentioned as an exception to cherished rules of womanliness, springs to mind, for she was exclusively a

landscapist, in watercolour and oil, and provoked such comment within her own time as: "... a landscapist of great ability and superior purpose" (Illustrated London News, 1859); "an English artist who is yearly growing in public estimation" (Illustrated London News, 1865); "One of the few English ladies who are artists by nature" (Athenaeum, 1867); "No English lady artist is better known than Madame Bodichon" (Hays, Women of the Day, 1884); [104] and similar judgments abounded after her death: "Those brilliant water-colour sketches, which possessed the very rare quality of imaginativeness, promised at the time to place their author in the very first rank of women artists"; "Her watercolour sketches exhibited in the Academy and elsewhere betokened an originality and imaginativeness only requiring persistent study to have procured for her a foremost position among women artists"; "Madame Bodichon was famous as a gifted painter in water-colours. Some French critics called her the 'Rosa Bonheur of Landscape'..." [108]

The reality behind these effusions can be appreciated in the Girton College collection of her drawings [109] which include examples of domestic and foreign locales, factual and imaginative pieces, set pieces and casual sketches; the vigour and verve which moved critics can be especially seen in "Near Lands End" (fig. 3), "Aqueduct" (fig. 7), "The Sea at Hastings" (fig. 203) and "Venice " (fig. 10), which latter demonstrates particularly the confident handling which confounded critical notions of the feminine. As the Illustrated London News' critic noted in reviewing her 1865 exhibition of North African drawings: "these drawings... are remarkable for spirit and freedom, and at the same time they abundantly evince picturesque feeling and the sentiment appropriate to each scene" [110] (figs. 204/9).

This departure from the norms of delicacy, sensitivity, and domesticity, provoked sarcasm, however, rather than praise, from some quarters which evidently found this adventurousness less than welcome:

> "The pictures of Madame Bodichon place us, as usual, in perlpenity (sic). The artist herself seems to be divided between the natural, the non-natural, and the supernatural.

> She would be quite at home in an eclipse, an earthquake, a volcano, a hurricane, or the crack of doom. Hence it is that her genius is too vast for a simple subject. King Lear in the storm might suggest a congenial theme: "Howl, howl, howl" till "heaven's vault might crack". Accordingly, in preparation, it may be, for such a topic, a study is here made of the 'Wind', even in its wildest and most relentless moods. The poor trees, sorely vexed, tremble to their very roots... The majority of works in the exhibition cannot, of course, swell with like windy ambition. Miss M.E.A. Pyne sends a mere 'Sketch from Nature', which, though amazingly slight, is delightful in its concord of grey greens, and has a manner truly artistic..." 111

This critic promotes what he sees as more preferable to Bodichon's vigour, but other women displayed her characteristics too, though perhaps less consistently; these were treated with a similar mix of praise and scorn:

> "By Mrs. Folingsby, there is a landscape, 'Die hohe Campe', a scene in Bavaria, wild, rugged, and gloomy, painted with a feeling for surface and substance that would do credit to even distinguished masters in landscape art."

> "In 'Tombs at Gadara - the snowy Hermon in the distance', Mrs. Robertson Blaine, a sweeping breadth of shade shows a cherished contempt of all prettiness, and a feeling exalted beyond the temptation of small infirmities - a desert solitude dimly seen in deepening twilight, with one spot in the distance, which the sun's light has not yet forsaken. This lady sends also other works, all distinguished by a vigorous, masculine decision of manner."

> "'The Glory of Scawfell' by Miss Kemspon, is not, as may well be supposed, lacking in ambition: the work, however, has more maturity of manner than most of its neighbours." 112

Without the benefit of seeing the works here mentioned, one can come to only a guarded conclusion, but it seems as if style and motif are combined in works such as Bodichon's and those mentioned above, equally, to give the abnormal effect that critics notice. Such motifs as must go in to

> "a study of wind on a fir plantation; another study of a thunder-cloud suddenly inflating itself from among more tranquil and broken fields of cirro-cumulus; a drawing of the monolithic remains in that legendary haunt of Arthurian and Druidical romance, 'carnac, Brittany'; and, last,and best, a very impressive drawing representing the 'Plain of the Metidja, Algiers', in the sombre gloom of late twilight" 113

which were Bodichon's exhibits at the 1866 SFA show as described by the Illustrated London News' critic - were not the ones which either readily recommended themselves to the majority of women, nor were easily accessible to them. As Hamerton points out:

> "The noblest phenomena are to be found in the wildest countries, and at the most unseasonable hours: at sunrise, in moonlight, in storm, and mist, and snow, on stormy lakes and seas, by flooded torrents, and on the cold mountain-land; phenomena to be patiently watched for, and accurately recorded or remembered; phenomena, I believe, not always accessible at Kensington or Turnham Green..." 114

There were several women who notably chose the exotic, heroic and elemental for their landscapes, but critical strictures reminded them that the interest of the subject would not make up for technical deficiencies: the Art Journal critic reproved Bodichon's colleague, Eliza Briddell-Fox: "The lady's Algerine sketches we have never greatly admired. New countries, races, and costumes present difficulties not to be mastered at a stroke." 115 Both Fox and Bodichon were the subjects of the same critic's reproach of the following year (1868):

"Madame Bodichon occupies, with off-hand, masterly sketches from Africa, the screen effectively furnished a year ago by Mrs. Bridell's truthful studies from the same continent. These regions have been of late favourite resorts of the ladies, who appear intent upon outrivalling each other in the marvels they bring home, to the amaze of less privileged eyes. Lady Dunbar assuredly has overstepped the modesty of nature in doing her utmost for the 'Ghiffa Pass, Algeria'. Artists who have not learnt to paint the simplest scenes truthfully often rush impetuously into the sublime as a refuge." 116

Expression or grandeur without a pictorial sense, it is implied, is mere bravura; an artist who was picked out by critics as having that picture-making sense, which she applied to foreign, but less challenging scenes than Fox, Bodichon, et al, was Madeline Marrable, (fig.210). The Athenaeum's critic wrote in the late '60's:

"Mrs. Marrable's 'Soft day in the Highlands' is one of the very few landscapes here that make pictures without regard to mere topographic interest. It is admirable in rendering of the atmosphere as saturated with rain, also in giving the effect of the distant mountains beyond a lake of dull metallic hue, and, furthest off, a brassy and pale horizon of vapours"

"The landscapes by Mrs. Marrable from the little-studied and very beautiful Engadine Hills, display rare powers in dealing with the picturesque, a large sense of atmospheric effects of various kinds, and much fidelity to nature..." 117

Anotther woman taking the exotic as her landscape motif, but less successful in her picture-making, was Clara Montalba, who seems to have erred on the other side, of bringing too much pictorial sense to bear, resulting in a formulaic and affected product. Her special locale was Venice, (figs.211/2), and although her Italianate watercolours had been praised when she started her exhibiting career in 1866, by the late '70's the Spectator's critic, for instance, had

these harsh words to say of her drawings:

> "Miss Montalba has many drawings here, but all are alike in two respects; in all there is a total contempt for drawing, and for decently careful painting; the only thing sought for is some subject which will give occasion to introduce an effect of light, or or that peculiar colour which this lady affects." 118

While the same note was struck by the critic for Tinsley's Magazine (while reviewing work by her sister, Hilda Montalba):

> "Let us all beware of forcing the moderation of Nature even in the direction of the beautiful... for Miss Clara Montalba, whose art has delighted us for so many years that we cannot presume to include it in the young work of the Academy, we have an apt and significant word of entreaty. It closes a graceful stanza which somebody addressed to Gainsborough when he had shown signs in his pictures of taking his own way too independently of Nature, with whom he is supposed to have had something of a lover's quarrel. 'Go', says the writer to the too artistic artist - 'Go find her, kiss her, and be friends again!'" 119

To concentrate on Venice, known chiefly through the consummate depictions of Turner, was perhaps tempting providence; other women made equally conspicuous specialisation of a particular locale, but chose more modest regions: Mrs. William (Emma) Oliver concentrated on Rhineland scenes, the Martineau sisters (Edith and Gertrude) on the scenery of Scotland, (fig.213), Caroline Williams on the Thameside Home Counties (fig.214), Frances Stoddart on Scottish and Welsh landscape.[120] Some women's choice of scene was even more homely, lying, one feels sure, just outside the back door or around the corner: E.M. Bowkett's work took its motifs from the Hastings and Sussex coastal area; Isabella Taylor painted the region of Ware, Hertfordshire, her home; Mrs. Charles (Mary) Jayne's pictures showed Home Counties landes and roads; Rosa Brett took her inspiration from the Kentish area where she lived (fig.442).

For some women the choice of landscape, and their selection within that genre, were inherited through the family connection: Williams is a case in point, belonging to the vast family of landscapists which included George A. Williams, Gilbert Williams, Alfred W. Williams, Henry Boddington and Sidney R. Percy (fig. 215); their work is similar enough for there to be a theory current in modern times that Caroline was the author of works that have been sold as pieces by George, [122] and all the professional painters in the family seem to have shared just one or two basic compositional patterns, and to have had a fondness for the Thames region. It is, in fact, in a moonlight marine which Caroline shows her individualism (fig. 216), though her Thameside scenes are charming in a modest and conventional way. The Nasmyth sisters and the Rayner sisters, all of whom have already been mentioned, were in a similar position, and like Williams and Maria Gastineau, daughter of Henry Gastineau, painted closely enough to the family pattern for their work to be consistently criticised as derivative. This did not mean, however, that these women were completely subsumed into the reputation of the patriarch: Jane Nasmyth was distinguished by the Athenaeum's critic in 1851 thus: "The lady shows herself worthy to bear the title of the English Hobbema", [123] andMaria Gastineau's inheritance was seen to have borne fruit, according to the Athenaeum in 1869:

> "Miss M. Gastineau has a name of old repute: she has profited by valuable lessons and succeeded, better than even Mrs. Marrable, in rendering the atmosphere, and in producing at least tolerably good drawing. See 'On the Road from Langdale, Westmorland'. Miss Gastineau's progress in painting is noteworthy." 124

It must be remembered that professional landscapists such as the Gastineaus, Rayners, Williams, and Nasmyths, painting for sale, were working to a market which was seen to approve certain modes and styles and subjects, and to be uninterested in others; so that among all the artists of these families, male and female, a common style and finish and character was, in fact, expressly sought after: it was the marketable, rather than the aesthetically wonderful (fig. 217).

There is another brief word to be said, however, about the family connection, with regard to landscape: it bears on the impression discussed above that few women achieved any esteem in landscape. There was a marked tendency for critics to ascribe women's success in the field to their male relatives' greater talents - a sure way of allowing them no reputation of their own. This tendency is neatly indicated by a comment on the work of Sophy Warren (figs.38/41), made by the Art Journal's critic in 1869:

> "Miss S.S. Warren, who, we learn, is no relation to a well-known family of artists, exhibits several drawings which establish an individual reputation for herself. 'Old Boathouse on the Thames' being a 'Moonrise', is naturally low in tone and colourless. The lady possesses an artistic sense, and there is something neat and nice in her touch." 125

the overwhelming implication is, that if Sophy Warren had been related to the other painting Warrens, her talents would certainly have been attributed to them, and she herself robbed of the credit for them. Reviews of the Female Artists exhibitions illustrate this point quite plainly over and over again: "The pictures of the Misses Williams are hardly distinguishable from those of the male members of the same numerous family..."; "Miss M. Gastineau's 'In the Pass of Glen Coe' - a rocky pass, with mountainous peaks - shows good, it may be hereditary, work"; "Miss Gastineau fortunately inherits a style, so she paints passably well by tradition"; "Mrs. J.T. Linnell has two landscapes which have a family likeness to a familiar name"; "Miss Sarah Linnell: 'Gipsies' Haunt'. The style of the Linnell family is unmistakeable in this work, and others by other ladies of the same name." 126

The point at issue is not whether such criticism was justified or not, but that it was used automatically and as a comprehensive assessment of the work, and as such is a manifestly undesirable and inadequate approach.

Landscape in the mid-century cannot be discussed without a consider-

ation of Preraphaelitism. In the 1850's, the Preraphaelite trend was generally associated with Ruskin, and it is more often than not through a connection with him (rather than with the Preraphaelite brotherhood) that those women who, from visual and verbal evidence, could be construed to have been affected by Preraphaelitism, were so. (An immediate exception to this is, of course, Elizabeth Siddall, whose connection with D.G. Rossetti is very apparent from her water-colours, (fig.32), but she not being a landscapist is not immediately relevant here.) Though Allen Staley's work on Pre-raphaelite landscape makes negligible mention of female painters, [127] many women were affected by the Ruskinian notion that the ordinary and the commonplace in nature, as well as the exceptional and the grand, were of worth as stuff for an artist to work upon, if observed and rendered with love and integrity. This attitude was not widely approved, of course, and even towards the end of the mid-century period was still rejected with a credibility guaranteed by the hierarchy of genres: "It is not difficult then to see the reason why landscape-painting is necessarily put in the second rank of art; for even if the impressions recorded be of the highest beauty, still it is but a record and an imitation..." said Poynter in 1872. [128] Some women, however, were evidently sufficiently imbued with the Preraphaelite attitude to hold nature as supreme, regardless of critical insistence on an academic credo.

Mention has already been made of Jemima Blackburn: another case in point is Anna Blunden, one of Ruskin's most attentive correspondents during the 1850's. [129] The Art Journal's critic observed of her work at the RA in 1867:

> "At one time it was feared that this artist was going the way of all Pre Raphaelites. Mannerism, however, has been corrected in time, and now this little picture, which for harmony of colour is a perfect delight, shows the reward of faithful study." 130

The landscape in question is "Tintagel". The inference to be drawn here is that her Preraphaelite qualities were negative ones: the

Illustrated London News critic shared that view: "'Mullion Cove'... vivid truthfulness... though a little photographic" (1864); "Devonshire views, though a little crude, have striking truthfulness" (1865); "'View on the Seine': photographic-looking" (1869).[131] But other quarters found her work, in its Preraphaelitism, quite praiseworthy: "'Mullion Cove': bright, solid and true" (1864); "the contributions of Miss Blunden are admirable" (1869); "As a true rendering of terrestrial anatomy, Miss Blunden's ('View Near the Lizard') appears to us supreme" (1864); "Among the meritorious small landscapes of the year... we may particularise Miss Anna Blunden's 'Tintagel', the last gleam at sunset, with rain passing away - an extremely faithful and impressive rendering of a grand subject" (1867); "a marvel of delicate workmanship ('Farigloone Rocks, Capri')" (1872).[132] Unfortunately, none of the critical opinions of Blunden's Preraphaelitism can be verified or rebutted by visual evidence, since the whereabouts of none of these works are currently known.

Rosa Brett's connection with Ruskin was at second hand, through her brother John, who later became the flag-bearer for Preraphaelite landscape: a letter from John to Rosa establishes that Ruskin would not come to see their work, but, as an apprentice Preraphaelite, John was familiar with the great man's writings, and his personal contact with him in the latter 1850's is well-known.[133] The Preraphaelite character of Rosa's landscapes cannot only be seen in surviving oils like "Thistles" (1861) (fig.438) and the undated, later "Study of a turnip field" (fig.441); in watercolours (fig.442); in albums in the possession of her descendants and framed but, apparently, unexhibited drawings of the early 1850's (fig.434), also in the family's possession, but can be guessed at from her sketchbooks, where the meticulous, somewhat scientifically inclined approach anticipates a highly detailed and finely coloured picture.[134] In a sketchbook from the 1870's, for instance, there are pencil sketches of wooded landscapes, with notes around the page:

> "(1)oak light - warm yellowish brown, flat and crisp leaves very small and separate on lower brances (sic) particularly almost like fine powder stem something of a dark

violet the whole tree thiner (sic) of foliage than here drawn
(2)oak, bright yellowish green and nearly solid - stems browner and rather greener than no. 1 and dark
(3)Ground brownish...
(6)green near the stem and altogether like velvet considerably darker than 5 shadows on stump are all darker than shadows on the grass...
(8)this is lost amongst foliage of near trees and the shadow immediately below 8 is more broken than here drawn and softer
(9)small patch of bright green...
(17)light green trees yellowish in the light and dark green in the shade Distant trees less solid than drawn here, 17 slightly less intense in the shade than the darkest shades of no.2 and gloomy and hazy near the ground. Shade of 17 darker than its shadow and not so grey."(sketch dated May 25th, 1871)

Similarly, a few weeks later, a pencil sketch of a cloudscape with notes including the time and weather conditions, and such observations as: "Deep blue sky Darker than darkest part of clouds... edges fleecy and brilliant at the same time" (10th July, 1871).

Another evidently Preraphaelite artist, whose tendency could have come from the Nazarene influence as readily as from any domestic representative of the trend, but none of whose paintings remains to speak for themselves in this respect, was Howitt, already discussed at length above; though none of her works has been located, critical reaction tells a Preraphaelite tale: ¶

"'From a Window.' A glimpse including Caen Wood, High and Highgate. Painted with a great deal of detail and resolute purpose of truth. The twilight meadow is lovely, and very delightful. In the strong hues of the American creeper and the crimson-streaked sky there is some failure of harmony"

"'Sensitive Plant' is also an attempt in Pre-Raphaelite style. The flowers which surround the two pictures are the best part of the performance. They are arranged with taste, and well characterised..." 135

There are other women, related to the Preraphaelite circle, whose art betrays that connection, but whose subject matter does not make them relevant here: they will be discussed below, though Joanna Boyce can be mentioned for her excursions into landscape such as "Shanklin" (fig.218), and other no longer extant works.

In reviewing the Female Artists exhibition of 1866, the Art Journal's critic noted: "Picturesque street scenes, and architecture crumbling under the hand of time, 'female artists', from some latent cause yet to be discovered, appear to paint with peculiar aptitude."[136] He was referring to topographical landscape, or the depiction of scenes whose main interest lies in their architectural content, usually old or quaint. He went on to praise particularly Fanny, Margaret, and Louise Rayner, and Isabella Jones, all of whom specialised in street scenes of picturesque and aged towns. By the late '60's, the novelty had perhaps worn off and over-familiarity was breeding formulaic art:

> "'Arlington Church, Sussex', by Miss M. Rayner, shows one of those mouldy interiors which the artist has for many years affected, treated with pathos and not a little mannerism. This example makes the subject more mouldy than ever, ruder, more delapidated. At the same time we are bound to say that Miss Rayner paints these subjects with truth and force far beyond those of David Roberts; hence she is more pathetic." 137

Pathetic or not, such a narrow specialism inevitably resulted in a certain amount of repetition which rendered the work, however skilled, ultimately of limited interest. Louise Rayner specialised in scenes of Chester (fig.48) and the house of Knowle, Margaret concentrated on churches, while Nancy managed more variety, but corporately they became identified with a narrow range of material:

> "Miss Louise Rayner furnishes one entire screen with graphic views from Chester; the picturesque forms, the broken light and shade, the crumbling wood and stone-work of the old city, are just the materials most favourable to the manner which the Rayners have made their own." 138

But their work was recognised as being good of its kind, though it fell a victim to its own limitations. If that could happen to artists as obviously talented as the Rayners, it could well be the fate of lesser artists, like Victoria Colkett (later Hine), whose list of exhibited works shows the same narrowness, reading like a tourist's guide to the sights of Cambridge, tempered with a sprinkling of famous views: at the British Institution, her record reads: 1859, "Interior of King's College, Cambridge"; 1860, "Queen's Gateway, Trinity College"; 1862, "Clare College and Bridge, from King's College Grounds"; 1863, "St. John's College, Cambridge", "Brecknock Castle"; 1864, "Pevensey Castle"; 1865, "Clare Hall and Bridge on the Cam"; 1866, "Norwich Cathedral from the Bishop's Palace Garden", "Clare Bridge and Avenue, Cambridge".[139] An example of Colkett's East Anglian watercolours, "St. Peter Mancroft Church" (fig.219) of 1863, in the Castle Museum Norwich, shows that such repetition produced less than spirited images.

The appeal of the topographical to women who were already inclined to depict views, was presumably that the motif stayed still, was of inherent interest, and simply needed to be efficiently reproduced and sensitively disposed to produce a satisfactory picture. Subjects, too, could be found almost everywhere; a selection of titles will show that: Georgina Wilkinson's exhibits at the Academy were: 1855, "Interior of Trinity College Chapel"; 1856, "Interior of the Dining Hall, Trinity College, Cambridge"; 1857, "Interior of York Minster"; 1865, "The Hall of Ambassadors, Seville"; 1866, "The Hall of Ambassadors, Seville"; 1867, "Seville Cathedral, from a window of the Alcazar"; 1868, "In the Alcazar, Seville"; 1870, "Via Santa Reparata" - it is all the same, whether one is at home or abroad. Mrs. Elizabeth Phillips' exhibition record reads like an even fuller Cook's tour, the architectural sights supplemented by natural ones: 1849, "The Ancient Rathaus, Koblenz, Moselle"...; 1850, "The tower of Andernach"..; 1850, "Interior of the Chapel of St. Erasmus, Westminster Abbey"; 1853, "Sunset at Zug, Switzerland"; 1857, "The Market place, Bacharach, on the Rhein"; 1860, "The old mint at Cantebury"; 1861, "The Market Holle Etoile, Rouen"; 1866, "Caudebec on the River Seine, Normandy"; 1868, "Junction of the Moselle and Rhein"; 1871, "Newland

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Vale, Ulverstone"; 1872, "Ferry, Windermere"; 1873, "Baptistry, Herne Church, Kent". [141] Such an eclecticism is far from the narrowness of Louise Rayner's specialisation, and, indeed, it is the minuteness of the Rayners' work which brings it to a higher level, as art, than Phillips' somewhat indiscriminate observations apparently reached; the selections made by Phillips (and countless other women) recalls the status given to the special aspect of nature, over and above the commonplace. Such professional artists as the Rayners, however, had a self-awareness which was indirectly identified by critics who, though they remarked the shortcomings of the sisters' work, recognised its value:

> "Miss Rayner has contributed many drawings, in all of which the object has been to produce the greatest amount of effect; this has been accomplished with much success, insomuch as to give point and interest to fragments of architecture and street scenery, which, presented in an ordinary way, would fail to arrest the eye." 142

Although some women whose interest lay in landscape may have either started out with topographical landscape (e.g. Clara Montalba) [143] or interspersed their natural scenes with topographical ones (e.g. Mrs. Oliver), [144] only the Rayner sisters (and among them, chiefly Louise) could be positively identified, in the period, as topographical landscapists, among women; within the landscape genre, topography's status was ambivalent. There is a great sense of defensiveness in this excursion by the Art Journal critic in his review of the SFA exhibition in 1872:

> "Some may look down on architectural drawing as narrow in range, and bald of originality, but to us it seems that while invaluable as training for eye and hand, it is no mean thing to do one's best to preserve the similitudes of the shrines and homes which show what our forefathers were, and what we should be. Nobody need feel above such work, though most may fear themselves below it. The hand can only bring out what is in the heart, and the man or woman who shall adequately read and expound to us all the

> the secrets of our ancient castles, solemn abbeys, and stately mansions, will be second only to the men who built them." [145]

Hamerton declared that, "In landscape, the only course of study is a whole life of observation and quiet accumulation of facts." [146] A few of the artists mentioned here went a long way towards that end - Bodichon, Oliver, Brett - but none to an extent which gained them a position which lasted: but they, along with the Nasmyth women and the Rayner sisters, Harriet Gouldsmith and others, represent a large proportion of the art produced by women in this period: "Of course a large proportion of the collection exhibited are landscapes" wrote the Illustrated London News critic of the 1859 SFA show; "Landscapes abound..." observed the Art Journal critic of the 1868 exhibition [147]; that relatively little of this output seems to have survived has obscured this circumstance, but it should be borne in mind, if a true picture of the mid-Victorian woman artist is to be constructed.

Portraiture

'Face-painting' is particularly a part of the English tradition, and at the beginning of the mid-century period, there were several women artists who operated successfully within this tradition: Fanny Corbaux (figs. 220/1) had been working since the late 1820's, the Sharpe sisters (principally Eliza (fig. 222) and Mary Anne in portraiture) were of the same generation, as was Margaret Carpenter (figs. 118/21), the one living female artist to have a reputation of consequence when the period opened. [148] In this genre, the mid-Victorian woman artist had exemplars to inspire her, in Kauffmann, Mary Beale, Maria Cosway, and Anne Damer, and social tradition made portrait sketching, 'taking a likeness', an acceptable pastime for her. Indeed, the number of women who practised portraiture only, and only of their friends and family, can be seen from the SFA exhibitions to be enormous; examples of this essentially humble practice have, ironically, been found most useful in building up that rather self-consciously grand collection, the National Portrait

Gallery, which, apart from the professional portraits it includes which have already been mentioned, contains pieces by Helen Allingham of her husband, Lady Eastlake of her friend Florence Nightingale (fig.70), Clara Lane of her uncle (fig.223), Clara Martineau of her father, Jemima Blackburn (or rather Wedderburn, as she was then) of a friendly social gathering (fig.224), Clara Pusey of her family table (fig.225), and Alyce Thornycroft of her mother (fig.226). [149] Portraiture's suitability for women was seen, in fact, to lie more in this emotional connection than in any artistic aspect of the genre: that is to say, women were not thought to be especially endowed with a facility for capturing likeness and spirit on paper or canvas, but were considered sensitive and sympathetic souls who could feel their way to the production of a charming portrayal. This notion was not denied by those women who made portraiture a professional success, although it tended to hedge them around somewhat with emphasis on the pretty, delicate and feminine, wishing to see them practise on female sitters or infantine ones in domestic or pretty settings. This idea does not necessarily need to be precisely expressed in order to be effective: it can consist in encouraging portraits of women and children and neglecting to praise other portraits, or in commending the artist to more delicacy and less bravura in handling. There were two women whose experience illustrates this question interestingly, Margaret Carpenter and Annie Dixon.

Carpenter must be considered firstly: she was an exhibitor at the Academy from 1814 to 1866, and at the British Institution from 1814 to 1853, sending work to Suffolk Street as well, and to the Society of Female Artists on two occasions. [150] Her first patron was Lord Radnor, setting the style for a clientèle which boasted many aristocratic names and, later, upper middle-class families within its ranks. [151] Men, women and children alike peopled her canvases, which included straightforward portraits and fancy pictures and groups. Seen as a link in the chain of English portraiture - "An investigation of the principles of Reynolds has not betrayed her into a servile imitation of his style" (Athenaeum, 1851); "She worked in the tradition of Lawrence, but her portraits have a distinctive fanciful and feminine character" (Burlington Magazine,

1936) [152] - she was kept busy over a period of some decades, her practice reaching a peak in the late 1830's and '40's, when, to judge from her record of commissions, she might execute between 25 and 35 works in one year. [153] Although her work was characterised or is remembered as feminine - "... scarcely a year passed without her exhibiting portraits and fancy subjects, all admirably painted and gracefully treated"; "'Portrait of a lady' (has) much feminine grace"; "for virtuosity, as well as for feminine sensitiveness, it ranks with the very best products of the time... the slightly roguish quiet of the girl suggests a feminine rather than a masculine insight" [154] - this does not deny the value and power of her work, which was well-praised within her own time: "painted with the usual qualities of the substantial manner of this lady" ("Summer Amusement", 1849); "In execution the work equals some of the most prominent exhibited on these walls" ("Mrs. John Walton", 1849); "This picture is distinguished by that excellence which we have so often had occasion to eulogise in this lady's works" ("Children of George Smith, esq.", 1849); "marked by the usual roundness, power, and lifelike character which distinguish all the works of this lady" ("Children of George Eyre, esq.", 1847). [155]

The collection of leaving portraits at Eton College, of which she executed thirteen, (fig.227) during the 1830's and '40's, along with her Archbishop Sumner (fig.228) now in the National Portrait Gallery (1852) and the same gallery's Patrick Tytler (fig.118) (1845) show her equal to a male sitter, adult or juvenile [156]; while the Augusta Thelusson (fig.229) in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, the undated "Mother and two children" (fig.230), and "Lady and Parrot" privately owned in America (dated 1852) [157] show her command over female subjects; and the Sheepshanks collection's "Devotion" (fig.71) (1822); the charming "Love Letter" (fig.231) (c.1840), suggest [158] that she could handle an imaginative portrait with more than adequate facility. She drew and painted, though most of her works were oils, and she worked on a range of scale which indicates a confidence which only stopped short of the monumental.

More frequent, though, was the female miniature portraitist: such

was Annie Dixon, almost as successful as Carpenter in her own branch of the genre. She flourished from the mid 1840's to the end of the century, including royal patrons and aristocrats among her sitters.[159] She began her career in Lincolnshire, and moved to other provincial centres during the latter 1840's, before establishing herself in London. She exhibited at the Academy from 1844 to 1893, this being a useful shop-window for the professional painter. Like Carpenter, she meant to support herself by her work, but unlike Carpenter, (who was married, and even when a widow received a Queen's pension), she was obliged to - Clayton recounts that "Family affairs rendered it necessary that, early in life, Miss Dixon should make her own way in the world."[160] She was, to judge from her exhibition record and critical response, better than average at her chosen job - "Of the miniatures the broadest and most artistic are those by Miss A. Dixon, and Messrs Moira and E. Tayler..."(RA,1867); "more than maintains her position as a fine miniaturist" (RA, 1861); "Two groups of the children of C.J. Boyle esq... are remarkable for a rich tone of colour and good drawing, points of excellence in studying children very rarely attained" (RA 1860)[161] - and a sister artist has left an impressive estimate of her, which, in the absence of many existing examples of her work, must be taken on trust. The writer is Lady Waterford, to Mrs. Bernal Osborne:

> "I have Miss Dixon, the miniature painter, staying with me. She is a very clever and original woman, and Lady Marian Alford justly described her to me as a character resembling those in Currer Bell's novels. Her talent is very remarkable, and I think her taste excellent.... Her works are admirable - children especially. Did you see the Princess Beatrice at the Exhibition this year by her? - it was like a little Velasquez." 162

The works executed by Dixon for Waterford are, in fact, different from and typical of her productions, including watercolour sketches of a figure in a setting, full-length figure sketches, and portrait miniatures, (figs.232/5). The portrait miniature being seen as much as a jewel of sorts, as a work of art, necessarily seemed closer

to the feminine than the masculine, and because of its scale called for qualities that were traditionally womanly: delicacy, a neat and fine touch, simplicity. The subjects of miniature portraits, however, could as easily be male as female, and there is one example accessible of the artist's work, of Lord Tennyson (fig. 236), which shows that she could be effective in integrating a male into this female mould.

Dixon was trained by Magdalene Ross (Dalton), another woman who practised miniature portraiture. Other reasonably successful practitioners of the small-scale, if not the minute, were Margaret Gillies, Mrs. Pearson (née Dutton), Margaret Tekusch, and Emma Kendrick (who published a book on the genre in 1830, "Conversations on the art of Miniature Painting"). [163] These women did not necessarily cover the same ground as each other: the market for portraiture was very wide, and could be found in any social centre: Tekusch, for instance, found a clientèle which included Disraeli, (fig. 237), the historian Grote, the Countess of Granville (fig. 238), the Ambassador of Austro-Hungaria (fig. 239); Gillies' sitters included the literary élite of Richard Hengist Horne (fig. 59), Leigh Hunt (fig. 240), Harriet Martineau and Charles Dickens; Ross/ Dalton was a servant of the Queen (fig. 93). Larger scaled portraiture, too, was equally ubiquitously in demand: the Sharples family, practising in Bath and Bristol, show that a veritable industry could be built up by keen and indefatigable artists, women or men. The mother, Ellen, and the daughter, Rolinda, of the family, seem to have been no less diligent than their male relatives in the portrait-painting business which they established in the area (fig. 241). [164]

In portraiture more than in any other genre, a work's value could be borrowed from its subject-matter: this meant that an emphasis on the sitters a painter could attract often distracted attention from the artistic merit of the work, or falsified the merit of the work, and led artists to capitalise on the sitter's fame. An example of this seems to be in Gillies' portrayal of Harriet Martineau, described here by the sitter in her autobiography:

> "... my family were rather disturbed at the 'atrocities' issued, without warrant, as likenesses of me; and especially by Miss Gillies, who covered the land for a course of years with supposed likenesses of me, in which there was, (as introduced strangers always exclaimed) 'not the remotest resemblance'. I sat to Miss Gillies for (I think) a miniature, at her own request in 1832; and from a short time after that, she never saw me again. Yet she continued, almost every year, to put out new portraits of me - each bigger, more vulgar and more monstrous than the last." 165

The same idea that the sitter can endow the work with their glory, motivates Clayton's emphasis in her accounts of the royal or aristocratic subjects that an artist has secured, and was probably a greater temptation for women artists than for men, since women's own talents were very needful of defence, even when their training opportunities had improved in the 1860's, from critical scorn and attack. This has meant, too, that the subject of a portrait has been attended to, to the neglect of the artist. Noble subjects were, no doubt, financially more rewarding than less patrician sitters, but it is patently foolish to maintain that a portrait of a countess or prince will necessarily be better than that of an esquire or a friend, although it might be more interesting to the observer.

An undeniable advantage of painting the portraits of famous people, though, was that their prominence rubbed off on your work and on you, the artist: Mary Severn benefited by this, as has been described, and such publications as the Court Album gave portraitists a chance to publicise their work to bourgeois patrons who might want to get one step nearer to nobility by employing the portraitist of royalty and aristocracy. The Irish painter, Elish Lamonti, otherwise little known [166], was included among the artists in the Court Album of 1857, with a portrait of Lady Dufferin (fig.242) (one of eleven) and the frontispiece of the Duchess Dowager of Manchester and daughter (fig.243) (the other artists employed on the Album were all male, it is worth noting). [167] As has been noted, however, it

was rather in sculptural portraiture that women artists benefited from royal patronage, in the persons of Thornycroft and Durant. It is surprising, however, to note from exhibition catalogues, how many other women were practising sculptural portraiture in the period, even though their names are now quite unfamiliar. They include Mrs. E.W. Beech (SFA 1858), Miss Horner (SFA 1858), E.O. Kennard (RA 1866, 1869), Rachel Levison (SFA 1857/9, RA 1856/9), Mrs. Saxon McCarthy (BI, RA and SFA 1850's), Caroline Nottidge (RA 1867/83), Julia Pocock (RA 1870's), Rosina Smith (SFA 1857/8, SBA 1860), Sarah Terry (RA 1862/79), Catherine Fellowes (RA 1867/72).

Worthy of more mention are the sculptors Mary Grant and Amelia Paton (who became Mrs. David Octavius Hill), both Scottish but exhibiting in London as well as in Edinburgh.[168] They both display the family connection, though in different ways: Grant was the niece of Sir Francis Grant and Paton/Hill the sister of Noel Paton, so that though they may have inherited art they did not inherit the medium, nor, in Paton's case, the genre, that they adopted. Grant's marble busts in the National Gallery of Scotland (figs.244/6) and her head of her uncle in the National Portrait Gallery (fig.247) show a fine feeling for modelling and character, of male and female, adult and infantine heads, while sundry evidences of her other works show her to have been quite a versatile artist (her "S^{T} Margaret and the Dragon" of 1874 (fig.248) is a heroic full-length, while one of her Academy exhibits in 1873 was "John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness, a bas-relief", and Lady Belcher (herself an amateur artist) recalled an incident in 1878, where she found the artist was at work "on the rereedos for the cathedral in Edinburgh, and was also executing some figures for the porch of Lichfield Cathedral"[169]. Paton is something of an exception to the other women described here, in that the works she became most respected for were all of male subjects: these included "Dr. Livingstone" (1869) (fig.112), "Sir David Brewster" and "Carlyle" (1868), "Captain Cook" (1874) and "Stanley" (1873). No allowance nor apology seems to have been made, either, for her gender: ""Mrs. D.O. Hill is a lady whose native genius, fostered by education, has wrought out for her a distinguished place.".."The sculpture is meagre in quality, but the names of Mossman,

Webster, Brodie, G. Ewing, D.W. Stevenson, and Mrs. D.O. Hill are a fair guarantee of quality." [110]

Portraiture's role for the student artist, of allowing the novice to practise when no other subject is available and enabling the apprentice to experiment on a manageable scale, was, after a while, not a help but a hindrance to the female artist, because she might never go beyond the intimate, homely and essentially limited work, since the close circle of friends and family was seen to be proper to a woman, and it is interesting to what an extent portraiture was kept in reserve by women whose art had reached beyond the simple demands of portraiture and its lowly rank, as a fail-safe supplement or auxiliary to their more testing works. Louise Jopling is an obvious example of this, attempting imaginative works for exhibition from 1868, but continuing throughout her career to pad these submissions out with portraits, oil, drawn or sketched (figs. 249/50).[171] Ward did the same, particularly using her children as subjects for portraits which were presented more usually as fancy portraits than straightforward depictions.[172] One looks in vain in such works - in both the case of Ward and that of Jopling - for innovations or advances which might explain them as experiments in the artist's development, and has to conclude that they are safe reserves that a woman can fall back on. Some particular works in the genre by women whose main energies went on other sorts of picture, can, however, be seen as innovatory, in a way that is particularly interesting from the artist having been a woman. Osborn's group portrait of 1855, "Mrs. Sturgis and her children" (fig. 77),[173] is set strikingly out of the domestic interior where a bourgeoise mother and her children were mostly occupied in the period, on a lonely seashore where they appear to be quite unaccompanied. The individuals are allowed a certain amount of psychological autonomy, the mother's introversion being especially noticeable, only the gaze of the right-hand girl being fixed in a self-conscious way on the spectator. Though the conviction of the scene is marred by the inept perspective of the foreground - the sand seems to tilt downwards towards us - the stormy sky of the background is very effective in giving an atmosphere that is far from the sweet and delicate serenity or frivolity of the mother

and child convention in portraiture. Jane Egerton's "On the Terrace" (fig.251) of 1857, though espousing the prettiness conventionally required of child portraiture, places her four girls in an open space with a rolling landscape beyond, between the children and which she puts no barrier, indeed placing her figures almost more in the open background than in the close delimited foreground. The girls pay attention to the spectator - all but the oldest, who has no time for her observer(s) - but have the appearance of being absorbed in each other and in thought and activity which belongs to them, rendering them not the property of the spectator, as is conventionally the case.[174] To portray recognisably unconventional persons from the woman's world can also be seen as a form of challenge to the conventions of the genre: Osborn can be mentioned here again, for her portrait of Bodichon (fig.91); Herford's likeness of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson would be another case in point (fig.252).[175] A suggestion of independence, not simply of the genre's conventions, but of the more generalised limitations on women which the norms of the genre took part in, can be seen in the self-portraits which women of the period produced. To depict herself as an artist, or to portray a sister artist, was surely an assertion of an identity which the conventions did not allow, at the beginning of the period, and which they only reluctantly recognised as the years went by. A fine example is Severn's self-portrait now in the National Portrait Gallery (fig.124) , where though not in the act of painting, she clasps her portfolio as she looks out directly at the spectator.[176] A young self-portrait by Jopling, of which the National Portrait Gallery has a reproduction in their archives (fig.253), shows just as confident a self-image, though a less earnest one than Severn's. Rose Rayner's "A sister artist" of 1858, Fanny Hall's "My first model" of 1861, Anderson's "Flowers from nature" of 1864, Lucy Madox Brown's "Painting" of 1869, Sophia Belae's "The Pleasures of Art" of 1871, and sketches in the notebooks of Boyce/Wells and Brownlow (figs.254|5) show a range of portraits of the female artist which testify to the growing awareness which a woman practising in any genre might increasingly have in the period. The most piquant form of the type must be Florence Claxton's "Scenes from the Life of a Female Artist", exhibited at the SFA in 1858, wherein portraiture

and self-portraiture combine to take the form of an art-historical document which, tantalisingly, is not at this point in time known either in its original or reproduced form.[177]

The prolific activity of women in the period within portraiture has not been comprehensively covered here: the very amount of female portraitists active, and the very nature of the ways in which they could be active in the genre, militate against there being a coherent body of information and material from which to achieve a complete account of mid-Victorian female portraitists - Redgrave's Dictionary listed more women as portraitists than as any other kind of artist (except amateur, and that category must have included many who practised portraiture), but Clayton gave only eight[178]; Carpenter was freely praised in the period, but her works are difficult to locate; there are to be seen interesting and charming pieces of portraiture, by women known and unknown, whose background, history and significance is all but impossible to establish - such are the circumstances under which it is difficult to fully describe how important portraiture was to women artists in the period and what they made of that importance. There are a few specific fine works in the genre - Starr's "Brian Hodgson" (1872) (fig.123), Boyce/Wells' "Sidney" (1859) (fig.256), Jopling's later "Self-portrait" (1877) (fig.257) - which survive, as examples of the high points reached by women in the genre, but it is significant of the status and character of the genre in the period, that the authors of these works chose to devote their energies chiefly to other (higher) genres.

Subject painting and sculpture

The characteristic type of Victorian painting is often seen to be the narrative: this term covers a multitude of sins, embracing as it can history pictures, literary painting, epic and religious works - what in France would be called 'grandes machines' - domestic scenes, romantic pictures, and even the fancy picture.[178] (In fact, any work which does not fall into the categories of still life, portraiture or landscape, could be construed as narrative painting.)

The term rather used here as such an umbrella term, however, subdivided into such categories as the literary, historical, religious, and so on, will be subject painting. The much-abused term 'genre' will be used to specify types of subject painting that form recognisable trends within the category of subject painting, such as domestic genre, Continental genre. Perhaps the working definition of a subject picture can be that it is an imaginative work, whose point is the idea of the subject - as opposed to a work in the still-life, landscape, or portrait genres, where imitation of the subject is the point of the work.[180] Then the particular sub-division of subject into which a work fits (as historical, religious, romantic, etc.) would be determined by the exact character of the idea that it expresses or on which it is based. Within the period under discussion, 'subject painting' was in use to denote non-imitative genres, but 'figure painting' and 'narrative painting' were also familiar terms, though they did not necessarily connote an identical range of work. For some, for instance, 'narrative painting' seems to have been descriptive of subject painting which was not epic; thus, the Spectator reviewing the 1850 Academy:

> "For some years the distinguishing power of English art, beyond the province of landscape-painting, has shown itself in the treatment of what we have usually called story or narrative pictures - pictures that tell a story or incident of the romantic or satiric kind, without rising to the grade of historic painting." [181]

In that historical works do tell stories, however, this use has been departed from as misleading. It is in the columns of the same paper that another sub-division of subject painting was made, (in the course of a review of the Academy of 1862), which should be noted, since it denotes a contemporary attitude, but which will not be used here, since it is evidently based on very subjective definition:

> "As the 'sensation' picture must be, we may feel thankful to those who, like Mr. Solomon in this design (Abraham Solomon's 'The Lost

> found'), divest it of obvious claptrap and exaggeration. The same praise is fairly due to Miss Rebecca Solomon's clever picture 'The Fugitive Royalists' (fig.21)..." 182

Women's subject art breaks down into different categories from those usually used in modern times to discuss mid-Victorian painting, deriving from the fact that their experience, both of art and of the world, was different from male artists' (and it is the work of male artists which dominates the modern art historian's survey of the period.) [183] For instance, the category of marine painting is practically redundant in women's art, and the category of epic pictures is very slight, while what is usually called genre must properly be broken down if an adequate coverage of the work is to be made, into domestic genre, infantine genre, and so on. Similarly, the term 'narrative painting' is difficult to employ usefully when discussing women's work, since women tended to embody rather than explicate a theme, choosing rather a single figure from a historical, literary, etc., source than a scene from the same, rather a tableau than a chapter; so to use the term 'narrative painting' would leave many works which, though inspired by history, literature, etc., do not tell a story from the same, nameless. (This will be reverted to below). Women's subject art peaks at different points on the graph from men's, so to speak. Thus, in discussing men's art one might need to distinguish between the classical and the historical, whereas in discussing women's art it is necessary to separate the domestic genre from the fancy picture, or the literary painting from the fancy picture. There were, however, certain particular trends within the field of subject painting in the mid-century that were common to artists of both sexes, and certain stylistic developments that women's work was susceptible to, just as was men's.

Preraphaelitism claimed women:in the field of landscape, in particular, but also involved women who were touched by Preraphaelitism through personal contact with Ruskin and the Brotherhood and who showed that contact in their work, within whichever genre that lay: Emma Sandys (fig.260), Joanna Boyce (fig. 14), Emily Hunt, Elizabeth Siddal (fig.33), Marie Spartali, Lucy (fig.264) and Catherine

Madox Brown, Anna Blunden, are among them.[184] The pros and cons of the movement came as vigorously to light in discussion of women's work as they did in consideration of men's:

> "This picture marks Mrs. Thomas's artistic skill in a different style of drawing, and is well deserving of commendation. It represents one huge Fungi (sic) surrounded by its younger brethren, all of which are drawn with an observance of nature sufficient to please the most fastidious of the pre-Raffaellitish school"
>
> "Miss Agnes Millais is ambitious, and to a certain extent successful in her design, illustrating the old ballad, 'The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green'... Much just comprehension of the subject was thrown away by the idleness which allowed the artist to make herself ridiculous, by indulging in bizarre flesh-colour: for instance, Pretty Bess has emerald-green rings round her eyes..."
>
> "Anna Mary Howitt: 'From a Window'. A glimpse including Caen Wood, Highgate. Painted with a great deal of detail and resolute purpose of truth. The twilight meadow is lovely, and very delightful. In the strong hues of the American creeper and the crimson-streaked sky there is some failure of harmony."
>
> "It is a pity that a picture of such deep and exquisite sentiment should be marred by a background of unmitigated green, with no tint gentler than that of duckweed or verdigris. Why should every leaf thus jostle with its neighbour to see which shall come nearest to the eye of the spectator?"
>
> "It is not surprising that Mrs. Hay's enthusiasm for early Italian Art has directed her to choose for models the beautiful feeling, spiritual conception, and, at least, intended perfect loyalty to Nature, of that exquisite, although imperfect asethetic development; yet her judgment might have checked enthusiasm on the hither side of reproducing the technical defects of the passionate masters..." 185

The rise of Whistlerian aesthetics, too, left its mark among women artists, though less clearly; the case of Jane Escombe's 1869 RA

exhibit, "Drapery", shows its differing effect on critics. The Athenaeum review of the Academy that year remarked: "she has borrowed a leaf of Mr. Whistler's book of magic", while the Times critic waxed eloquent in his hostility to the same picture:

> "If this (Wynfield's 'My Lady's Boudoir') is an example of the right use of Japanese properties, Miss Escombe, hard by, has given us a most startling illustration of their wrong use, in the picture which she calls 'Drapery' of a lady, with a very amorphous head, crowning a shapeless figure, in a dressing-gown of impossible pattern, something between a harlequin suit, a kaleidoscope, and a design for a stained-glass window.. This awful figure and the more awful dress are repeated three times, in the lady's reflection in a cheval glass and in a picture which the lady is painting from the reflection. One such figure is more than most people could bear; but three! - it is enough to breed a nightmare in impressible minds." 186

Less challenging adoption of Whistler's style is to be seen in such a work as Jopling's "Five O'Clock Tea" (fig.265) (1874), where the artist advances the letter more than the spirit of Japonism. (She also showed "La Japonaise" at the same Academy, but this image is not known now).

The trend for the pair or partitioned (dyptych) picture which is characteristic of the mid-century period, shows itself recurrently in women's work: from Hurlstone's "Women of England in the 19th Century" (1852) and "The clubhouse and the Workhouse" (1850) to versions of "Industry" and "Idleness" (Lizzie Chilman, 1857, Catherine Madox Brown, (fig.266) 1874/5), the comparative brace of images crops up with varying themes. The maughty and appealing child who appeared in "Industry" and "Idleness" also animated Farmer's 1866 "In Mischief" and "Out of Mischief" (fig.267); more sombre was Clifford Smith's poetically titled piece of 1848, in two compartments, showing a 'before' and an 'after'; while Howitt's "The Lady" ("Sensitive Plant") of 1855 had less evident reasons for being bi-partite. In the juvenile sketches of Brownlow, the two-part

picture space is used for the stark comparison of modern history subjects, while its usefulness is just as appropriate in drawn images, such as MEE's "Waiting" and "Watching" (fig.268) for the Illustrated Times in 1871, and in Florence Claxton's series of paired scenes "England versus Australia" (figs. 145/51) in the same paper in 1863.[187]

There are subject choices, too, common to the generality of artists in the period. The aim in this examination of women artists' work is not necessarily to claim that they did make different work from their confrères, but to examine their work for what it was: the absence of women's work from the established genres of the period, as testified to in surveys of Victorian painting heretofore, does not indicate so much that their work necessarily falls outside those categories, but rather that it has simply not been considered for its relationship thereto. It has already been asserted that women's work demands a reorientation of usual categorisations before it can be justly integrated into a survey of the period as a whole, and it is the intended implication of this account that it should be thus integrated, not that the different categorisations that women's work seems to call for be separate from those used to describe the period as a whole. The service which a close study of a limited period, such as this means to be, can render, in this light, is to consider works and artists in such detail that it can be seen that they do, indeed, have a relationship - whether comfortable or not - with the framework of genres that is already established for the period, and could have a better one, if the example of their work was heeded. Many of the works to be mentioned here are now lost, so assessment of their character and significance must be partial or tentative; but, even so, patterns will be seen to emerge from a close study of the evidence available, both visual and verbal.

Before examining thematic areas in which women artists produced a distinctive body of work, let two of the subject choices which men and women have in common in the period be considered, to indicate what male and female artists might have in common with regard to pictorial type and style, and what might be the precise ways in which

they differ when working the same ground. The first shows women working beyond their experience, the second within it.

There was a distinct vogue, rising in the late '50's and lasting until the early '70's, for the exotic subject, more often than not the harem scene.[188] (It was in 1850 that J.F. Lewis showed "The hareem", his first and very successful Oriental subject picture, at the OWS, which he followed with many similar works.) This taste for the exotic produced works that could be subsumed into various genres: Lewis' pictures, as the most well-known manifestation of the trend, set a pattern of minute, proto-Preraphaelite (and somewhat prurient) observation with emphasis on interior light and shadow, colour and pattern, and anecdote. Few of the Eastern works by women of which visual evidence survives follow this pattern: Carpenter's "Interior of a Turkish Harem" (1866) does, while Jerichau's "Odalisque fanned by her Negro Slave" (18??) probably does too, along with Henriette Browne's "Harem in Constantinople" (18??), and Bridell Fox's "Arab Marriage". The relaxing of morals and mores, however, of Turkey, Egypt, and northern Africa (which was also embraced by this trend), was obviously less open to women, and, one suspects, less attractive to them. One has only, indeed, to read Harriet Martineau's account of harem life in "Eastern Life, present and past" (1848), to put paid to any expectations of locating a female equivalent to Lewis.[189] A number of works, however, from various women, attest to the interest which they, also, felt in this subject-matter: Browne's "An Eastern Beauty" (1861, fig. 269), Jerichau's "The Favourite of the Haree (1871) and Anderson's "Scandal in the Harem" (1876)[190] show serious painters acknowledging a contemporary trend, while Edith Martineau's "Head of an Arab" (1870) and "Balkan Tribesman" (1867, fig. Carpenter's "Portrait in Oriental Costume" (1858) and Jopling's "Turkish Study" (1870)[191], seem to indicate the touristic interest in the East which also gave rise to landscape and figure work produced as a result of travels in that part of the world. Holman Hunt and Thomas Seddon are paralleled in this respect by Mary Severn ("A Jewess of Smyrna", "A Levantine Lady", "Jewish Cemetry" (1866)) and Bridell Fox ("Zora, an Arab Girl" (1866), "The Dance, Algiers (1867) and landscapes), while Bodichon should not be forgotten with her

north African landscapes and portraits of village and natural life.[192] The total sum of works within this trend is probably smaller within women artists' number than among that of male artists, because of unequal mobility and unequal access to the sources in question, yet it is noticeable that women did take up the exotic fashion gratuitously, as a guise for anecdotes or images which might, in fact, have been couched equally effectively in any national mode, and in this way it was used by women who seem to have taken the trend up for just one or two works: Mrs. Frederick Hurlstone's "Oriental Pastime" (1858), Emma Gaziotti Richards' "The black burnous" (1851) and Fanny Corbaux's "The Carrier Pigeon" (fig.271) (1837),[193] would come into this category. Artists who went through a phase of the exotic could often be found to have taken a trip abroad, and among the women to whom this applied, the results of their travelling tended to take as much of a landscape and portrait form as a narrative form (witness Bodichon, Bridell-Fox, and artists mentioned in landscape section above) and in this they differed less from their male contemporaries of the 1850's and 1860's than from the men of the 1870's, producing such machines as "Israel in Egypt" (Poynter, 1867) and "An Egyptian Feast" (Edwin Long, 1877).[194]

It is, of course, the case that the taste for the exotic and oriental was as much, if not more, pronounced among French painters of the period, and among the works in the SFA exhibition of 1861, from one of the French contributors, was a work which, to judge from the Art Journal's comments, represents what neither British women nor British men, at this time, did with the trend for the exotic: "Under the name of Louise Eudes de Gumard, are five pictures, of which some are aspiring in character, as (1) "La Captivité de Babylone", a large work, dealt with in a manner far above all the minor tricks of the art..."[195] Both women and men in Britain treated this trend, by and large, as a variation of romantic or genre painting and an exotic form of landscape and portrait painting; women's treatment of the trend seems not to have reached the epic heights, however, which it seems a French female artist could attain, and which British men of the later mid-century generation reached.

The second trend in subject work which was common to painters of either genre, was the fashion for the gleaner. This character can be male or female, adult or juvenile, and was treated, again, in ways that collided with other genres, such as the fancy picture and the landscape, and even perhaps the religious picture (given Ruth and Boaz). Though it is quite clear, from exhibition catalogues of the '50's, and to a lesser degree of the following two decades as well, that gleaners were almost innumerable at the London galleries, curiously few of these images seem to have survived, and with women's works, especially, critical descriptions must furnish an idea of what specific treatments of the theme were like. One can surmise, though, just from some titles, a tendency to a trivialisation of a potentially hard-hitting social topic, in such pieces as Brownlow's "The little Gleaner" (1858), Margaret Backhouse's "Little Gleaner" (1865), E. Harrison's "Little Welsh Gleaner" (1858), and Backhouse's "A gipsy Gleaner" (1870) [196]; this diminution of the theme is more marked, from title alone, in women's work than men's, and seems also from written evidence to be so, though it must be borne in mind that social awareness would be less looked for, by and large, in women's work than in men's, and therefore a critical interpretation of a gleaner by a woman artist might fail to acknowledge its challenging qualities, preferring to concentrate on its quaintness or charm. For instance, Kate Swift's "Gleaners" (1858), was described thus by the Art Journal's reviewer:

> "Two rustic figures, an elder and a younger sister, resting at a stile. The little girl, seated on this side, plays with a goat; the face of the child is extremely well-painted, and admirably lighted by reflection. The elder of the two leans over the stile; but the face is not so attractive as that of the younger." [197]

Frustratingly - for this work is also untraced, like Swift's - the same writer did not notice in the same exhibition Emily Burford's "The weary Gleaner", which suggests less a fancy picture than a piece of modern history. Given the mood of British painting at this time (the late 1850's), especially in its application to narrative themes

of a working or rustic character, it seems more feasible to suggest that such paintings as these would be more in the nature of Frère than of Millet, say; the groups of painters who markedly treated topics of social concern in the period (the Preraphaelites, Redgrave, and the Graphic generation of Fildes, Walker, Holl et al) did not use the gleaner as a type, suggesting that in Britain the image was, in fact, more one of rustic interest than social concern. This is not to say, however, that gleaner images must have been all of a kind; the titles of women's treatments of the theme suggest a certain variety: "The Gleaner's Child" (Carpenter, 1850), "Tired from the Glean" (Backhouse, 1870), "She gleans in the fields until even" (Brownlow, 1861), "The Gleaner" (Harriet Hillier, 1858), "Gleaners waiting for the last load" (Ambrosini Jérôme, 1857).[198] This range is suggested less by the titles of gleaner pictures shown by men at the same time: works called "A gleaner", "The gleaners" or "The gleaner" were shown by at least nine male artists at the Academy between 1849 and 1854 alone, while more imaginative titles featuring the subject from male artists within the same time were almost negligible (e.g. W.A. Atkinson, "Gleaners crossing a brook", RA, 1855; W. Crosby, "The tide Gleaner", RA, 1861 and W. Linnell, "The Gleaner's return", RA, 1862, however, a little later on.)[199] It could well be, however, that man-made gleaners showed more variety in themselves than they did in their titles.

The significance of the gleaner for women, given that gleaning was chiefly a woman's task, was necessarily different from the meaning the image could have for male artists; it is therefore very tantalising that none of the treatments referred to above remain to articulate that difference for themselves. That there was an awareness on the part of women artists that certain subjects belonged to them, so to speak, in this way, is apparent from the frequency with which they treated them, even if few conclusions can be drawn as to the artists' attitudes to this fact, because the works have not survived. Gleaners, then, as well as being a general trend in the period, can belong, in a discussion of women artists' work, to a subject category of <u>images of the female worker</u>.

Images of the female worker

The gleaner's sister, the hop-worker, was thus also often treated by women, as was the reaper, another agrarian female; thus "A reaper of Alsace" (J. Ryley, 1857), "An Arran Reaper" (Gillies, 1861) and "The hop-pickers" (fig. 175) (Edith Dunn/Hume, 1865), "Hop-picking at Sevenoaks" (Sarah Hewett, 1859), "Dinner-time in the hop-garden" (Mrs. J.F. Pasmore, 1876), "The hop Queen" (Anne Bartholomew, 1862) and the sketches of Rosa Brett, (fig.272).[200] Critical responses to such works indicate that, again, the picturesque in such works was seen to be the uppermost characteristic; though it is also apparent that it was this quality which was looked for and approved, with disoussion of such works revolving more around whether or not they worked than around what they worked towards:

> "'An Arran Reaper', Miss Gillies, is a girl wearing one of the sun-bonnets common in some parts of these islands, and especially in Arran, trussed up so as to form an extremely effective headgear. The figure has all the beauty and interest that can be given to such a study without passing the pale of rustic incident. Conceptions of rusticity are too frequently interpreted by an exterior that has no power of expression beyond its own coarseness. The sweetness of this figure is by no means an inconsistent attribute of humble life."

> "With a little more ease, and less determination at all hazards to paint pretty, Miss Hewett will excel in figure scenes. The 'Hop-picking at Sevenoaks' is as good as many academical studies of the same kind, and much better than many pictures of Italian vintages." 201

If such critical response is to be taken at its face value, there was apparently a consistent refusal by these artists to engage in discussion of the social significance of these female images, yet a consistent choice to portray them, which suggests an identification through gender which, however, does not transcend the barrier of class. This is not the case, however, in images of that more celebrated female worker of the period, the seamstress and her sister

the governess, where the predominantly bourgeoise status of the female artist allied her very closely with her subject. Men, of course, treated these images too - the inspiration for seamstress subjects, "The Song of the Shirt" was written in 1848 by a man, Thomas Hood - but it must not be thought that, because it is Redgrave's governess that is chiefly remembered or his seamstress[202] who stays in the mind, women's treatments of a subject which was so much their own property, were negligible.

As early as 1829, a Miss C.J. Hague showed "The Seamstress" at the British Institution and as early as 1831, Louisa Sharpe showed "The arrival of the new Governess" at the OWS. At Suffolk Street in 1852, Mrs. Frederick (Jane) Hurlstone showed a painting called "The Women of England in the Nineteenth Century". It is currently unlocated and appears to have been unreproduced at the time, but the Art Journal critic described it thus:

> "A satire on the charity of the time. The essay is in two chapters: an opera box, with its habitués, and in the distance, Taglioni or Carlotta Grisi; the other part of the story tells of the most abject misery. We see a creature starved and in rags, drudging for bread which is served to her in crumbs. She seems to be making a shirt. The splendour on the one hand, and the squalor on the other, are brought into inevitable contrast. They are, indeed, not nearer to each other in the picture than in reality." [203]

This is a less usual treatment of the image, since she is more often shown in stark isolation, as well as "abject misery", as in Blunden's treatment of the theme two years later, "For one short hour..." (fig.273), shown at the same gallery. Here the unfortunate woman seems to be seeking divine help with her task,which is demonstrated in an understated way, though the figure's pose is overtly expressive, if not of misery, then of helplessness. Although the picture's impact is ponderous rather than dramatic, it was engraved that year by the Illustrated London News and used with reference to Thomas Hood.[204] Florence Claxton also treated the character, in an image

of extreme distress, in her "Needlewomen" (fig.147) of the "England versus Australia" series of 1863. Later seamstress images, lacking the topicality of the 1850's works, tend to have a more decorative character, as in Jopling's "Song of the Shirt" (fig.274) from c. 1886, Governesses, offering even closer identification for the female artist, who might very well have been a governess herself if she had not taken up art instead as her hedge against 'redundancy',[205] seem to have had more impact in women's hands than seamstresses. Rebecca Solomon showed a "Governess" (fig.275) at the Academy in 1854, captioned thus: "Ye too, the friendless, yet dependent, that find nor home nor lover. Sad imprisoned hearts, captive to the net of circumstance."[206] The painting contrasts the lot of the employee, reading with her young pupil in the back parlour, with the happy position of her employer or employer's daughter, free to dally with the young man at the left. It was used as the illustration to a story called "The Governess", by Mrs. E.W. Cox, in the Keepsake two years later,[207] wherein the relationships evident in the picture are explained by the governess having been called to teach an orphan who is, in fact, her own son whom she had given up years ago when deserted by her husband, while the young man appearing to pay attention to the young lady of the house is, in fact, enamoured of the governess but is being encouraged by her to pay court to the other woman, so that she is protected from the advances of the governess' long-lost husband - a sorry situation indeed for the wretched governess! Whether this story was written with the artist's permission, or, indeed, written for the artist, is not known, but without the verbal narrative to explain the picture's richness of psychological connections, the impact of meaningful glances and conspicuously distinct groupings is less than it might be. The conviction of the work is lessened, too, by the artist's lamentably inept use of perspective, at both left and right hands, and the significance of the exterior scene on the right hand is, unlike in Solomon's predecessor Redgrave,[208] not narratively comprehensible. An artist similar in status to Solomon, Emily Osborn, produced a "Governess" in 1860, which was bought by the Queen; characterised by the Illustrated London News' critic as "very clever but very bitter"[209] on its exhibition at the Academy that year, the picture was described

thus by James Dafforne in the Art Journal a few years later:

> "There has been a fracas in the schoolroom, and mamma is appealed to by one of the children. The governess is summoned before the lady, who is evidently one of those mothers - by no means an insignificant number - who think that governesses ought to endure everything 'on the lowest possible terms': she is vulgar-looking, overdressed woman; has, doubtless, wealth at command, but possesses not an ounce of kindly consideration or tender, feminine feeling. Of course she sides with her pet boy, and the other children maliciously enjoy the defeat of the young lady: all of them inherit her nature, and would resent every endeavour on the part of the governess to bring them under proper discipline, by kicks and scratches, as well as by rude and taunting speech." 210

while the Saturday Review greeted it as one of an established type:

> "... may fairly compete with any work of the kind in the room. There is, indeed, no attempt at novelty of treatment in this most hackneyed theme. The governess is, as usual, tall, graceful, and refined - the unjust mamma is stout, ill-tempered, and richly dressed - the children are ugly and malevolent-looking little demons. Still the cleverness of the painting is undeniable. Every line has meaning and force, and the colouring is very good." 211

The painting was engraved, and well enough received to be described twenty years later as that "well-known picture of 'The Governess', in possession of the Queen (which) has been engraved and distributed into thousands of English homes." [212] In the same year as Osborn's treatment of the theme, appeared Adelaide Claxton's plate in the London Society, illustrating a poem, of "The Daily Governess" (fig. 276), refreshingly in an exterior setting, while her sister Florence's amassed governesses of "England versus Australia" (fig. 146) (1863) must not be forgotten. [213] Much later in the period, a particular variant of the governess, the music teacher, appeared in

the subject of Starr's "Hardly Earned" (fig.277), hung on the line at the Academy that year. The Illustrated London News critic congratulated the artist on choosing a 'real life' subject, and the Times critic wrote:

> "There is an unforced pathos in Miss Starr's tired daily governess who, after her wearisome day's trudge through the muddy streets, and her more wearisome day's work of hammering 'scales' into her pupils, comes home to her shabby lodging house parlour to fall asleep from sheer exhaustion by her cold fireside, where the ashes have gathered grey, and the tea-kettle stands soot-encrusted and silent on the hob..... There is no undue insisting on the painful or pathetic side of this over-true picture of hard and ill-paid toil..." 214

The familiarity of the subject was recognised by the critics of the Athenaeum and the Spectator, in their comments: "that piece of popular sentiment which she styles 'Hardly Earned'..."; "Miss Starr paints a stock subject in a picture of a tired music-teacher, called 'Hardly Earned'..."[215]

Less recognised as a type within working images of the period, but even more familiar, is another domestic creature, the maid. Arising in many cases from the artist's own environment, these images tend to be documentary and even affectionate, rather than critical or campaigning; sometimes they seem to be, in fact, a sort of domestic portraiture. Joanna Boyce/Wells exhibited "Our Housemaid" in 1857, painted a piece called "Doris" in 1859 which took as its model her sister-in-law's housemaid, and left a sketch of a domestic servant descending the stairs with a tray under her arm (fig.278), which may be an additional version of the subject; in addition, one of her successful Academy exhibits was "Peep-bo!" (fig.279), in which the maid holding the baby is given as much pictorial prominence as any other figure and appears, in fact, to be more successful than the other adult figure in the scene.[216] Other titles indicate the range of interest which this image held for the female artist, to whom this figure would generally be a familiar and important element

of her own world: "The waiting maid" (Eliza Smallbone, undated), "A piece of Impudence" (Mrs. Stebbings, 1861), "French Housemaid" (Louise Eudes de Guimard, 1861), "A Dutch Maid" (Adelaide Burgess, 1863), "The Nursery Dinner" (fig.156) (Florence Claxton, 1864).[217] The nursery nurse and the washerwoman are other domestic females who made less frequent appearances in women's pictures.(fig.280).[218]

This recalls the fact that the work most commonly accepted as appropriate to the woman of the period - whether she be lower, middle or upper class - was that of wife and mother, and, indeed, female artists betray this in their work, producing many pieces which fit more properly into the category of domestic genre than into a division which amasses images of the woman worker. It is therefore important to remember the alternative contexts for women as workers which female artists could envisage, particularly such as E.N. Fielding's "The Matchwoman (1850), Osborn's "Bal Maidens on their way to work" (1873) (fig.281), Naomi Burrell's "Factory Girls" (1857) Boyce's "Heathergatherer" (1861) (fig.282), and Edith Martineau's "The Potato Harvest" (1888) (fig.283),[219] as well as the images of an artist who has already been seen as keenly concerned in her work with the nature and occupation of women in the period, Florence Claxton: she showed in 1861 at the National Institution a frame of drawings called "Woman's Work, a medley", which the Athenaeum's critic reported as: "intended, so says the artist, to illustrate the received opinion that 'Woman's Work' should centre in man."[220]

At a time when the range of work open to women was expanding beyond imagination, and to an extent that many found extremely contentious, the richness of the images of women workers that female artists' works present must considerably modify the range of images that we are accustomed to think of as typically mid-Victorian.

Closely related, but nudging another and distinct trend in narrative painting in the period, are those images of women workers, like the Burgess and Guimard above, whose interest is amplified by an ethnic distinction, which might bring some local colour with it. The tasks involved in such images were various indeed: from Gillies' "An

Arran girl herding" (1860) and Margaret Robbinson's "Straw-rope making in the Highlands" (1866) to Georgina Swift's "Dutch fisher-women mending nets" (1864) and "Belgian Lacemaker" (1871) [221]; but they all formed part of the round of female labour, whether at home or abroad. The trend of which they more strongly partake, however, is that of the continental genre, which attracted men and women alike.

Continental genre

The particular meaning, and corresponding attraction, which images of foreign fishergirls, lacemakers, etc., had for female artists - a meaning derived from a similarity in their own experience to their subjects' lives - comes through in the wealth of such images and in the minute gradations that female artists found in the theme. Male artists could only observe, whereas female artists could identify with, such subject-matter. [222]

A distinction can be made between such pictures, which show the woman and girl at work or with the accessories of a particular task, and the interest in continental genre which is content to display the costume or mores or social ambiance of a foreign community: these pictures are very specific in their subject-matter, and frequently restrict themselves to a single figure, who is therefore the picture's sole interest and point. Jobs which were a prosaic part of the domestic round were depicted: S.E. Townsend's "The Lacemaker" (1851), Blunden's "The Lacemaker" (1865), Ellen Partridge's "The lacemaker" (1862), Justina Deffell's "Lacemaker and her grandchildren" (1864), Mrs. Ashwell's "Filatrice" (1866), Mrs. C. Smith's "Crochet Worker" (1853), Marie Chosson's "The Knitter" (1862), Adelaide Burgess's "The Embroidress" (1863) and "Knitting Lesson" (1867) [223]; jobs which took a woman out of the house, and were perhaps specific to a particular region: L. Hemming's "A Normandy Fish-girl" (1851), Jerichau's "Danish Milkmaid returning" (1864), Georgina Swift's "Boulogne Fish-girl" (1868), Adèle Mathews' "Paysanne normandé" (1865), Bertha Farwell's "Breton Market Women" (1861), C. Walker's "The watercress Gatherers" (1860), Edith Ballantyne's "A Brittany Fruit-girl" (1874). [224] The picturesque appeal of such works is not

to be denied, and is in some cases capitalised upon - see Brownlow's treatment of fruit-stall girls (fig.284), and Mrs. J.F. Pasmore's "Flower-seller" (fig.285), and Murray's "The belle of the Market" - but a consistent choice on the part of the artist of women workers of one sort or another, depicted variously and, from critical responses, apparently with consideration and care, must be seen as a conscious and meaningful identification with 'woman's sphere' in all its guises, varieties and locations. The range of workers and contexts for women's work, of which female artists showed themselves aware, is impressive in itself, and must be related, as must the genre in toto, to the increasing range and opportunity of and for European travel. It is appropriate to recall here that numbers of women seeking art education on the continent were growing throughout the mid-century period, and the limitations which propriety set on women's movements abroad (in the widest sense) were gradually easing. The case of Emma Brownlow, who travelled in northern France especially for her art's sake, is a case in point (and will be discussed in detail in chapter 6). Whether or not the specific locale in which a work of this genre was set, depended in all instances on the artist having been there, the settings employed were certainly various, and always depicted in their most salient characteristics. A more confident or knowledgable artist would, of course, employ more subtle and multiform ways of identifying her context than would lesser artists: Ward's "Market at Antwerp" at the Academy in 1852 was the result of first-hand observation and experience, and the Art Journal noticed it thus:

> "The characters and their properties are so accurately rendered, that we feel at Antwerp, and nowhere else. The principal figure is a maidservant, carrying one of those copper pails, of which we see so many in the market-place at Antwerp." 225

A cursory examination of SFA reviews throughout the period will reveal how dominant the continental genre was among female artists (particularly among second-rate female artists, it seems); the most conspicuous female proponents of the genre, however, were Elizabeth

Murray, Emma Brownlow, and Kate Swift.

Exclusively a watercolourist, Murray was recognised as a good, if undisciplined one, her chosen genre determining the quality of her work in a way that was often seen by critics as regrettable:

> "For dash, and a sense of life, light, and brilliant effect, this lady is unmatched in the gallery, and would be noticeable anywhere; but these qualities are caught at the sacrifice of all that is deliberate in study or permanently valuable in art. Drawing, proportion, and fitness, go to the wall, while this clever lady is flourishing away at picturesqueness." 226

Picturesqueness is the keynote to the continental genre: Murray took her incidents from Italian, Spanish and other Mediterranean countries, always sensitive to the characteristics of the location, if sometimes overemphatic of them. An appreciation from the columns of the Athenaeum, in its review of the 1858 SFA exhibition, can serve to demonstrate the characteristic sentiment and quality of the artist's exhibited work; it is a useful account, too, because it describes pieces which seem not to have survived, and in its detail indicates the esteem - though it be severely qualified - in which she was held:

> "Mrs. E. Murray, of Tenerife and Rome, need fear no comparison with any figure artist either in drawing or colour. "The Best in the Market" is the best picture in the room, and is worthy of Phillips (sic) as far as character and colour go. We do not know which is the most admirable, the Tenerife beauty offering the fruit for sale behind the temporary counter covered with a tapestry of newspapers, - the manly fellow with his half-longing, half-teasing look, - or the boy who, intent on cutting the fruit, is quite absorbed in his occupation. There is force, abandon, and an utter freedom of affectation or posing about the figures. The colour is crisp and pure. "A Spanish girl at Prayer" is beautiful in colour, with its lucid black and its green altar-cloth. It is complete in itself, and seems rather cast

> at once on the paper than deliberately painted, so harmonious yet so fresh are the tints. The eyes, however, want the lazy lash of the Spanish beauty. "Old House at Ycod" is fresh and bright, and curious as a reality. In "A Shepherd Boy" Mrs. Murray leads us to Rome; the red and blue dress, and the emerald of the peacock's feather are pleasant combinations. Passing by her "Peak of Tenerffe", we come to her "Dawn of Day", the head of a beautiful Italian peasant boy practising on a shepherd's flageolet. The large, frank eyes and the brown crimson of the cheek are given with a firmness and power that is almost audacity." 228

Examples of her work that have survived, in original and reproduced form, do not support such enthusiasm, though their emotional picturesqueness was no doubt much more appealing in the 1850's and '60's than it is now. "Rivals for Church Patronage" (fig. 286), in the Victoria and Albert Museum, of 1863, shows her feel for character and her ability to distinguish ethnic character, while displaying a nice sense of texture. The same collection's unfinished drawing of a Spanish woman (fig. 287) tends to a continental Book of Beauty style; while engravings from the Illustrated London News show "Pfifferari playing to the Virgin" (fig. 96) (1859) and "Beggars at a church door in Rome" (fig. 94) (1859) [229] to be lacking in their sense of composition, though full of expression and local colour. The demands of the type, for picturesqueness and quaintly interesting character and custom, seem to have caused Murray to overstep the limits of moderation sometimes: "a showy figure... a cheap receipt for making a popular figure ("Ave Maria, 1865)"; "perhaps may betray more ambition than knowledge, more power of effect than pictorial propriety, more character in excess than in moderation ("Gipsy Forge at Seville", 1868)"; "... that lady's usual brilliance of manner and emptiness of matter ("The Irrestible Beggar" and "Present of Fruit", 1860)". [230]

Murray was able to practise the continental fancy picture because she was resident and travelled abroad, and the interest of such pictures was not diminished by an equal knowledge or experience on the part

of the spectator; indeed, the sense often is, that such images are welcome because they confirm the spectator's own experiences of the foreign, not because they introduce some previously unknown matters. Thus, Murray's "Two Little Monkeys" (fig. 95) (1861) was captioned in the Illustrated London News when engraved for the paper's readers:

> "Everyone will recognise the truth of the portraiture of the young Savoyard organ-grinder, who, nursing a tame monkey on the top of that terrible instrument of torture, is endeavouring to coax a halfpenny out of you, regardless of the uncivil things you are saying of him, and the ill wishes you are bestowing upon him and all of his calling..." 231

Another artist who was most industrious in her search for the authentic picturesque, was Emma Brownlow, whose work ranged through different sorts of genre, including the domestic and the romantic, but whose prolonged interest in the continental comes through strongly and consistently in her oils. She travelled to the continent in the mid-fifties and again in 1863, in "courageous search for the picturesque", to use her own words. [230] She travelled to Brittany in 1863, but her earlier trip seems to have taken her as far as Italy and Switzerland; certainly traces of all these countries appear in her works: "Lobgesang at Berne" (fig. 425) (1861), "Wedding Dance in Brittany" (1866), "The beggar's story: the mendicant in Brittany" (1867), "The Riverside, Quïmper" (1870) (fig. 426), "Date me qualche cosa" (1862). [231] In such works, the authenticity of costume, attitude, ritual and atmosphere have been derived from study of the locale and observation of the characters portrayed, but a lot of Englishness goes into the sentiment: so, Brownlow's own enthusiasm for Brittany, for instance, was based on its being "picturesque and thoroughly foreign", to use her own words again; so topics that were of interest at home - as romance, childish charm, the humour of everyday life - were brought to bear in the foreign location so that its distinctness became quite clear. That is to say, continental genre fancies more often betray themes common in home-grown subject-matter than they do completely alien motifs, so that the impact of the continental context is effected by

comparison. This is why such artists as Brownlow can be found practising within the domestic, romantic and child fancy genres as well as in the continental, and how come Osborn, for instance, could make such varied use of her interest in the continental, producing romantic works ("Of couse, she said Yes!" (fig.288), 1864 and "Sunday Morning, Betzingen" (fig.289), 1863), childish fancy pictures ("The Christmas Tree" (fig.138), 1864 and "The Hay-boat", 1871 and "Carriage and Pair", 1863) and landscape ("Cemetry near Venice", 1877). Women who made a more discrete speciality of the foreign, tended to be landscapists (as in the cases of Emma Oliver and Bodichon).

A factor which should be noted, with regard to the continental genre, is the awareness in this country of the work of continental artists. Women had models in Bonheur, Browne and Jerichau, [232] but the works of these artists lay in somewhat more heroic ground than did the mundane stuff of genre. The Society of Female Artists included some foreign artists' work in their exhibitions, conspicuously in 1861 and 1862, when eleven and nine foreign exhibitors, respectively, participated. [233] A knowledge of European artists' work was encouraged by the Art Journal, and shared to some degree by the Athenaeum and the Illustrated London News (the Art Journal carried articles, for instance, in 186 , on "Modern Painters of Belgium", which included Fanny Geefs; one of her works was illustrated: "The young Mother" (fig.290) [234]; while Gambart's French Gallery brought much work to London which would otherwise have been seen only by those able to travel to Paris; the German Gallery did a similar job for Teutonic artists. [235] It was through exhibition in London that the work of Edouard Frère became so popular in this country, and he must be seen, more than any other artist, as the model for much of the continental genre work produced by British painters. On an exhibition of his work at Agnew's in 1873, the Times critic wrote that the artist:

> "has for many years enjoyed more favour in this country with the public of picture-seers and picture-buyers than any foreign painter of similar subjects... (his) work

> meets a genuine, wholesome, and kindly instinct in popular English taste." 236

His name came up, from time to time, in reviews of the Female Artists shows, with particular reference to the pictures of Kate Swift, whose works were often titled with French, German, Dutch or Belgian references ("Gedenk der Armen", 1866; "Das Festkleid", 1864; "Dutch Wedding", 1866); the Art Journal wrote thus of her exhibits in 1866: "Kate Swift, who is really a painter of much more than promise, thinks it safest to put her trust in negatives... She should learn the use of intermediate tones. "The Sister's Lesson" has a sweet simplicity which pleasantly recalls the style of Edouard Frère."[2] In previous years, critical comment on her pictures had run on similar lines, though Frère was not specified as an influence:

> "Miss Kate Swift does not fall short of her foreign sisters in truth to nature. Her style bears evidence, if not of foreign training, at least of the study of foreign models" (1863)

> "... though very far from being an accomplished piece of execution, this painting has style of a quiet sort, much simple nature, and throughout a certain largeness and readiness which might enable Miss Swift, with practice, to attain the level of good French or Belgian treatments of the same class, and at any rate greatly to transcend the limits of the mere commonplace English domesticism." (1864)

> "She appears to have been studying the foreign schools to good purpose." (1865) 238

In 1869, the artist married a Dutch painter, Christopher Bisschop, under whose name she thenceforward exhibited, and her work in the 1871 exhibition of the Society of Female Artists was greeted thus by the Art Journal critic:

> "Madame Bisschop has advanced amazingly, as might be anticipated, since she surrendered her maiden name of Swift for that of one of the most promising painters of Holland. "L'Espoir do la Fouille", displays the best

> traits of her husband's style... On the whole, this is the most masterly work in the room." 239

Whether justified or not, such conditional praise was meted out in the same year to another woman who had taken foreign exemplars for her models; the Art Journal critic here discusses Osborn's "Isolde":

> "... The manner is evidently foreign. Large, broad, and not solicitous of finish, the style is that of Piloty, the present leader of the Munich school. Miss Osborn, during a protracted residence in Germany, has had rare advantages, and we shall look with interest for proportionate results." 240

From available evidence, it seems as if women artists in Britain took such models as Frère for their work in the continental genre because the appeal of this sort of subject was essentially picturesque and emotional, rather than Realist or political. In this they differed little from their male contemporaries, for whom, however, the interest of the genre seems to have been slighter and shorter-lived. In fact, a characteristic of the majority of women artists in the period, as regards their choice of pictorial type, seems to have been that they persisted in a favourite theme or congenial mode much longer, or in greater number, than their confrères. Rather than simply being explained as a lack of initiative on their parts, this should be seen as reflective of their lesser education and narrower experience, and was productive of a greater body of work in any of the favoured genres than the generally more ambitious male artist might produce, thereby establishing clearly the character of those genres.

Domestic genre

Perhaps most taken for granted, among subject categories, both within the period and retrospectively, is the character of domestic genre, which because of their societal location and image, is a very recognisable type within the work of female artists. On close examination, however, this genre can be seen to be richly and often unpredictably various in women's hands, although there is also

plenty of evidence to confirm the (qualified) validity of the accepted notion of domestic genre consisting of kitchen and living-room anecdotes tepidly combining the inspirations of Hogarth and the Dutch school. The sort of recognition which this type of work had generally is indicated by a criticism in the Times, in 1858, of Joseph Clark's "Grandam's Hope" at the British Institution. The writer does not suggest that female artists have any special function within the genre, although what he says suggests that they might well:

> "(This picture) lifts Mr. Clark at once to the head of the long train of pinafore painters, who are rapidly assuming the dimensions of a nuisance, and, indeed, lands him in the very narrow region within which a few painters justify their right to find subjects in the nursery, the schoolroom, and the kitchen... This little is not trivial, for it tells a story of human hopes and aspirations, and it tells that story skilfully, unaffectedly, and distinctly... How sympathetic this kind of subject is to English minds is evident from the terribly large proportion of painters who are taking to it...." 241

The writer then instanced G. Smith, Bromley, Hemsley, Barnes, Henderson, Brownlow and Nicol "and others much too tedious to mention. Brownlow had by that date produced many paintings which would support her inclusion in this category, among them "Cottage Interior" (fig.291) (1853), "Granny's Lesson" (1856), "Our little Brother" (1858), "A village school near Boulogne" (1857) and "Helping Granny" (1857), and went on to specialise in scenes of domestic life, often featuring children: "Baby's First Shoes" (fig.292) (undated), "A Skein of Worsted" (fig.293) (1864) and "The Firstborn" (1865/6). [242] It is not known from evidence whether Brownlow's images sprang from her own observation, but to a large extent such pictures would be testimony of the artists' own lives. Ward's domestic works stand out, in this light, in their use of her own children's faces and figures to animate such pieces as "The first Step" (fig.64) (1860), "The Birthday" (1853?), "Bedtime" (1858) and "God save the Queen!" (1857) (fig.294), in which the artist

herself is shown with her children, as their mother; the familial aspect and atmosphere of this last work and of "The Christmas Pudding" ("The Crown of the Feast") (1868) (fig. 74.) and "The Morning Lesson" (1857) attest to and emphasise the artist's personal situation as wife and mother, over and above as artist. She later wrote, of her early career, that she had been "confining myself... to domestic subjects, which was surely natural, as all my leisure moments were of necessity spent in looking after my children."[244] There is just a hint, here, of some retrospective justification for such being the case (although she was praised for her domestic pictures, critics also made it plain that such works were of less consequence than her historical dramas), and indeed, it is clear that the genre was generally held to be pleasant but inconsequential - a reputation that has been confirmed latterly by the principal representatives of the genre being taken to be Frederick Hardy's, Thomas Webster's and C.R. Leslie's unchallenging anecdotes. The pictures of domestic life that women produced, however, are by no means always positive images of that world.[245]

Jopling's "Weary Waiting" (fig. 296) (1877) shows a woman and her small daughter waiting restlessly for the return of their absent husband and father (though he is not blamed for his absence, it being presumably caused by service to his country); witness, too, Florer Claxton's unhappy females in "England versus Australia" (figs. 145/51) (1863) and "The Hours AM and PM in London" (figs. 156/7) - the caption to the fifth drawing in the former series read, in part: "Woman's existence may be briefly summed up in one word - martyrdom."[246] It is tempting to assume that other works by women just as, if not more, critical of their lot were passed over by critics who found them embarrassing or distasteful, and without the works themselves, posterity must remain ignorant of their very creation. A picture which deals interestingly with the domestic world as imperfect, which has not survived but which was noticed critically, is Miss C. Smith's "I saw the young mother in tenderness bend..." at Suffolk Street in 1848, described thus by the Critic's reviewer:

> "There is much sentiment in a picture in two compartments, by Miss C. Smith. In one it represents a young mother bending with a mother's pride and joy over her infant slumbering in rosy health. In the other, the same child is lying dead with flowers upon its breast, the same mother stretched in anguish by its side, but with her hand upon her open Bible, showing that there she had sought and found consolation in her extreme misery." 247

Women's treatments of motherhood were, however, usually less grisly that this: more typical are Jane Bowkett's "Preparing for Tea" (fig.297) (undated) and "Afternoon in the Nursery" (fig.298) (undated), Boyce/Wells' "Peep-bo!" (fig.279) (1861), Mary Ellen Edwards' "On Christmas Day in the Morning" (fig.299) (1878), Osborn's "Christmas Time" (fig. 67) (1865), Kate Swift's "Cross Purposes" (fig.300) (1860), "A Stitch in time saves nine" (fig. 301) (1865) and "Saying Grace" (fig.302) (1863), and, resoundingly, Bartholomew's "Domestic Life" (1858) captioned thus: "Oh happy mother - happy wife! Within thy humble cot, thou little dreamst tha care and strife Surround a happier lot. All nature showers o'er the her gifts, the flower its perfume brings, the minstrelsy of birds uplifts thy heart to holier things." [248]

Curiously, all these scenes of domestic bliss are populated solely b women, the male being conspicuous by his absence. The missing husband and father does, of course, testify to the exclusively femal dramatis personae of 'woman's sphere': the woman herself - usually the main character in such a work - maid, mother, daughters, and the occasional boy child not qualifying for masculine status proper. Such images of content as those mentioned above rarely even hint at the fact that such a world was only possible because of - indeed, wa posited on - the fact that the men were out in the world, breadwinni except for Bowkett's "Preparing for Tea" (fig.297), in which the woman looks out of the window to anticipate the man's return home, there is in these pictures neither a visible gap left by the absent male nor any sign that his presence is missed. [249] It seems that th function of the male partner in this contract is only necessary to

recall when his ability to fulfill that function is put into jeopardy or made impossible, by death or the possibility thereof: "Fisherman's children looking out for the Boat" (Brownlow, 1854), "Children on the seashore discovering vestiges of their lost Father" (Backhouse, 1860), "Ou est mon père?" or "Sweet my child" (fig. 303), "The widow's Tale" (Lottie Westcott, 1866), "My Father's Portrait" (Elizabeth Hunter, 1867), "I cannot sing the Old Songs" (fig. 304) (Adelaide Claxton, 1868), "The Conscript's Departure" (Brownlow, 1865 (Other works which address themselves to the loss in war of a husband and father, but of which it is impossible to tell whether their setting is domestic or not, include Emily Macirone's "The wife's dream of the Crimea, from the Times of February: 'The Englishwoman hears that her husband or son has perished from want, while the wealt of England was pouting out for their resuce'" (1855), Brownlow's "New from the War (to whom a victory speaks of his return, and a defeat means only he is lost)" (1869), Mrs. Musgrave's "The Crimean Legacy: a Highland Soldier bringing to the Widow of his Officer the pets of her slain husband" (1857), Sophia Sinnett's "Reading the list of the Killed and Wounded" (1857), Mary Ann Cole's "News from the Crimea" (1855) and McIan's "Soldiers' Wives awaiting the result of Battle" (1849).) [251]

On occasion, however, the loss of both parents was contemplated, with results that, startlingly to those believers in the inevitability of maternal feeling in women, appeal more in terms of the fancy picture, being sentimentally attractive, especially when the unlucky child was female (which, more often than not, in women's treatment of the theme, it seems to have been). Hence Osborn's "God's Acre" (fig. 305) (1866) and "For the Last Time" (fig. 306) (1864), Kate Swift's "The Orphans" (fig. 307) (1867), Adelaide Burgess' "Girls Begging" (fig. 308) (1864), Backhouse's "The Orphan" (1858), and Anderson's "Foundling girls in the Chapel" (fig. 309) (before 1877).[2] A particular articulation of this aspect of the domestic genre, is found in the series of oil paintings by Brownlow done for the Thomas Coram Foundation, or Foundling Hospital, in London, with which she was associated through her father being its secretary. Her scenes were "The Foundling restored to its Mother" (1858) (fig. 310), "The Sick Room" (1864) (fig. 311), "The Christening" (1863) (fig. 312) and "Taking Leave" (1868) (fig. 313). She also painted fancy pieces of

"A Foundling girl at Christmas Dinner" (1877) (fig.314), "The Foundling Girl" (1852) (fig.315) and "The Orphan" (1853) and "The Orphan Friends" (1864). [253] These latter works have more sentiment than her former set, which are interesting for the relationships they offer between the various figures; the single-figure pieces, or the pieces which feature only children, tend to the sickly and simple, offering as they do nothing beyond the immediate image.

The minutiae of the domestic world were, of course, the stuff of most mid-Victorian women's lives, even where those women were artists, and even at a time when that circumstance was being challenged in many ways, and one element of that world which was so recurrent as to merit recognition as a sub-genre in itself, was children.

Children

The depiction of children was, by and large, a form of the fancy picture among men and women artists alike. This was especially the case when the child or children were foreign - literally or metaphorically - to the artist. That is to say, there was in the period a wealth of pictures made of picturesque or amusing French, Italian, Dutch, Belgian, German or Spanish infants and adolescents, and an equal plenitude of ragamuffins, urchins, peasant and gipsy children. The quality of such works varied considerably, even where the intention - to make a pretty picture - was consistent, and was independent of the authenticity or secondhandness of the materials; it seems, rather, to have been determined simply by painterly skill. Thus, within this type, some fine pictures were produced and many modest, and not a few meretricious, works. The ostensible affinity of women with children and their undoubted familiarity with them, must have made the type a deceptively tempting one for those artists whose ambition was content with the low status of the genre and its facile appeal. Thus, the range in quality and character within this category includes such fine little pictures as Boyce/Wells' "Babbacombe Boy" (fig.316), "Little Welsh Boy" (both 1852/4), "Sidney" (1859) (fig.256) and "Bird of God" (1861) (fig.317);

Anderson's lovely "Tambourine Girl" (fig.318) and "Neapolitan Girl (fig.319) (both undated); Kate Perugini's modest "A little Woman" (1879) (fig.320) and "Multiplication" (1880) (fig.321); Brownlow' apparently laboured "On Thoughts of Charity Intent" (1864) (fig.32 and Backhouse's facile "Self-satisfied" (1861) (fig.323) and seemingly awkward "Children minding their mother's stall" (1859) (fig.324).[254] Boyce/Wells studied her subjects at first hand, as did Anderson and Brownlow, but the differing conviction of their works has nothing to do with a difference in atmospheric authenticity. Similarly, the Scandinavian painter Amalia Lindgren, exhibiting in London in the period, was evidently portraying authentic characters in "Girl tending Cattle" (fig.325) and "Grandmamma's Pet" (both 1863), but they remain modest little pictures.[255] Again, the children of Kate Swift fall into this category, for she managed the true character of her subjects - "a German domestic scene, which might have been painted by a German artist"[256] - but she remained a less than outstanding artist. This issue does not apply solely to the childish fancy picture, but is brought up here particularly because it is very apparent in this category of work, which, though low in status, embraces some very good works because some good artists essayed it.

An artist who specialised exclusively in the fancy picture of children, is Emily Farmer; unlike Boyce/Wells or Anderson, she work in watercolour, therefore producing what would have been considered necessarily slighter works. Though consistently criticised for too much finish, she was regularly praised by the critics and the spiri of her work, as well as the letter of it, approved: ".. charmingly naif and natural" ("Music", 1869); "... the face of the little girl who leaves off crying at beholding the object of search, is tender and pretty, and the expressions of the other actors are easy and natural" ("Finding the Lost Sixpence", 1861); "... The little peopl whom it is Miss Farmer's pleasure to paint are remarkable for their reality, and for the unaffected earnestness of their action" (1865) "Miss Emily Farmer's half length of a 'Girl Reading' is charming an unaffected..." (1869).[257]

In the face of a lack of surviving works - the Victoria and Albert Museum has a charming piece of this kind from beyond the mid-century period, "Kitty's Breakfast" (fig.326) of 1884, and a fancy female head, "In Doubt" (fig.327), of indeterminate date, while the Illustrated London News engraved a pair of "In Mischief, Out of Mischief" (fig.267) in 1866 + Farmer seems to have been a predecessor to Greenaway, whose mannerism and artificiality she seems not to have anticipated, espousing instead a charming if modest naturalism. "Children occupy an important position in the gallery, several of the fair artists having obviously devoted themselves to the contemplation of infantine life" [258], noted the Times critic of the first Female Artists exhibition. The number of such works is matched by the variety of manners in which they were couched: the appeal of the continental child has been mentioned - an appeal which even an artist as serious as Boyce/Wells did not scorn: "Wanessa" (fig.328) and the so-called "Italian Boy" (fig.329) [259] vouch for that - and Farmer shows the possibility of conceiving childish subject pictures. Among the motifs which offered themselves particularly to the painter of children, two stand out as favourites among women artists: the picture or story book and the schoolroom or lesson. In the former category, mention can be made of Bouvier's "The picture book" (1863), Miss Borrow's "The picture book" (1858), Agnes Fraser's (1857) and Mrs. Crawford's (1869) and Lucette Barker's (1871) pictures of the same title; Bouvier's "The new picture book" (1866) and Jopling's "The first picture book" (1879); and works called "The story book" by Mrs. Pasmore (1862), S. Davis (1859), O.P. Gilbert (1868), Elizabeth Rowley (1857), and Anderson (undated) whose precise title is "The children's story book" (fig.330). Closely related in spirit is such a work as Mary Gow's "Fairy Tales" (fig.331) of 1880. [260]

In the schoolroom fancy picture, the resemblance to the Domestic genre is very close, given the affinity between the child's schoolroom and the home, and that between mother and teacher: thus, Elizabeth Hunter's "Little Charlotte's Writing Lesson" (fig.332) (undated) and Farmer's "The Alphabet Lesson" (1863) (fig.333) are mear to a domestic genre work, while Hunter's "In Disgrace" (1865) (fig.334) [261]

is clearly a fancy picture, based on the anecdotal potential of child-like behaviour. Such works present a scene, usually featuring more than one figure, and an incident of sorts: similar are Anderson's pictures of girls, which often have just a single figure but which give a background of some elaborateness and a narrative, however contrived: "No Walk today" (fig.335) (undated) is the best known example; others are "Ladybird, ladybird" (1870) (fig.135), "Wait for Me" (1870) (fig.134), "A Foundling" (1870) (fig.336), "Red Riding Hood" (1868) (fig.337), "On the Tiptoe of Expectation" (1866) (fig.338) and "Christmas Eve" (fig.339) (undated). [262] Ward produced many such fancies, also, including "Fetch It" (1860), "The Toy Basket" (1862), "The young Archer" (1855) and "The little Boat-builder" (1860), [263] featuring male or female children. Less well but more prolifically, Margaret Backhouse exhibited the same sort of confection: "Beginning Life" (1862), "For our Pie" (1861), "Bringing home the Dinner" (1863), "Borrowed Plumes" (1863) [264]; her works were watercolour whereas Ward's and Anderson's were in oil. In pen and ink, EVB presented the same sort of images, though her children tended to occupy pastoral and sylvan lands rather than the domestic interior or back garden; her set of drawings called "A Children's Summer" (1853) (fig.81) - eleven drawings to illustrate poems by M.L.B. and W.M.C. - were described by the Athenaeum critic in the following terms: "... the etchings by her hand are commendable alike for beauty, vigour, and truth. She has caught the real spirit of childhood's life, - its amusements, enjoyments, and unschooled occupations." [265], and thus in the Spectator: "The whole is intensely poetical and fresh; every expression and action instinctively true, and the design careful in all points. The idea of the scene is impressed with the vividness of a picture actually left on the memory." 266. Her drawings in colour, such as the illustrations to "The Tales of Hans Christian Andersen" (1872) (fig.340) and the "Beauty and the Beast" (1875) (fig.341) show different qualities, and are less satisfactory than the chubby and lively types and pretty but clear and neat lines of plant and flower which characterise her drawings.

The works of these artists are much more interesting than the tediously frequent mode of the childish fancy picture whereby the

artist depicted a child's head and nothing else, and appended a fancy title to the whole, such as Boyce/Wells' "Bird of God" (1861) (fig.317) and "Do I Like Butter?" (1861) (fig.342) or Backhouse's "Self-satisfied" (1861) (fig.323) and "Adelaide" (1872).[267] Such works had very little on which to stand or fall but the physical attraction of the physiognomy portrayed and the painterly sense of the artist. In Boyce/Wells' case, the resulting works are fine pieces of their kind, but many women were less happy in the ends of their efforts, and critics hesitated not to tell them so.

There is no doubt of the moderate status of the childish fancy picture in the period: however good an artist was at this genre, she would not rise above a certain level of esteem because of such subject-matter:

> "'The little Boatbuilder' is worthy her reputation. We regret the absence of more important contributions from her studio (Ward's "Little Boatbuilder", 1873)"

> "Miss Farmer has been winning her way to popular favour among the very few figure-painters of mark in the ranks of the various water-colour societies. She has done this not by aspiring to treat lofty themes, for her subjects have ever been drawn from humble child-life... But her success is mainly due to her very felicitous and truthful rendering, without the least approach to caricature or vulgarity, of the expressions of childhood." [268]

The child picture hovered uncertainly between different sorts of genre, such as the continental genre or the domestic genre, and the portrait, and within the work of women artists presents a bewilderingly disparate range of works, in terms of sophistication, complexity, and painterly achievement. This is because, since women were supposed to have a particular sensitivity to and interest in children, and certainly did have a special access to them, the artists who attempted the genre were very varied indeed - much more varied than in the case of male artists, of whom only the less

ambitious or clearly only moderately gifted would have made this sort of picture. The genre certainly held attractions and possibilities for women which it did not, by and large, for male artists; and it is a pity that more of the numerous examples of women's work within it have not survived to give their own testimony, rich and varied as it would be.

Romance

A second sort of fancy picture very typical of the period, in which female artists had a different interest from male artists, was the romance; such works were often literally narrative; in that they told a story, or rather emblematic, in that they expressed an idea of romance. Along with its heirs, love and marriage, romance was very popular as a theme for men and women alike, but the immediate distinction to be made between how female artists treated romance and how their male colleagues treated it, is that women tended to use themselves (that is to say, female characters) to discuss the subject (not to the exclusion of men - who were obviously a very necessary ingredient - but to an extent where the female characters experience and manifest the romantic feelings, and the men about whom they are concerned are sometimes not even present in the picture, or occupy a different space.) In Farmer's charming large drawing "In Doubt" (fig.327), for instance, the whole of the picture space is filled with the female's head and shoulders, with never a glimpse of the man about whom she experiences such uncertainty. In works called "The Love Letter" or similar, the format is the same, but the male character's existence is signalled by the said epistle; Carpenter's version (fig.231) (c.1840) is a charming example, while Bridell-Fox's "The returned Love letters" (1864) (fig.16) shows stronger emotions on the same theme; and M.A. Cole's treatment of 1858 breaks the single-figure pattern. Solomon's "The Appointment" (1861) suggests what happens when both parts of the romantic couple are portrayed: "a handsome, fair-haired, Roman-nosed belle, standing, with open letter, by the fireplace - in the mirror over it we see the image of the favoured male, who enters at the door..." [269]. The male partner is relegated, such that there is still a prioritising of the female partner: Alice Walker's "Wounded Feelings" (1862) (fig.343)

shows the man in the background space, while our heroine and her confidante occupy the foreground; Osborn's "Of course, she said Yes!" (1864) (fig.288), which takes on a Germanic guise, has the heroine in our foreground space, very definitely separated from the man by the wall of the house, he only allowed to enter her space by forcing his head and shoulders through the window from the outside; the same separation, with the woman being the character that the spectator identifies with, is found in the equally picturesque "By the Gate" (1864) (fig.344) by Brownlow, where the woman faces the spectator while the man is shut out of the foreground space, beyond the gate, even if his exclusion is not to be permanent. Again, in another of Osborn's romantic fancies, "Sunday Morning, Betzingen" (1863) (fig.269), the young woman and an older occupy the frontal space which the spectator shares, while the man must stay behind the separating stall, although he leans over longingly into the female space.[270] This device, by which the female protagonist is given priority over the male partner, emotionally speaking, occurs also in pictures which have a romantic element but whose main point is not the romantic interchange of the couple (e.g. Brownlow's "The Riverside Quimper" 1870, fig.434), but it is particularly noticeable in romantic fancy pictures because the figures are the principal, if not the only, pictorial interest and loom so large in the picture-space. It is a device, too, which is not unknown in male artists' romantic fancies (see, for instance, Frederick Smallfield's "First Love", 1858; W. Lucas' "Rustic Courtship" 1865; or Alfred Elmore's "On the Brink" 1865, and Philip Calderon's "Broken Vows" 1857, perhaps) though female artists seem to use it more regularly and more decidedly. (There could be said, of course, to have prevailed a generally accepted idea that women were more given to romantic feelings than men, that they were the repositories of the idea of romance, and therefore more properly the expression or vehicle of it.) The selection of a female protagonist, when the artist is female, obviousl renders the work more autobiographical than if the artist is male: a statement is being made or a reflection being given, of the artist's own experience or aspiration.

Brownlow's and Osborn's works show that the romantic fancy picture

adopted, in its fancifulness, varied costumes and contexts: the historical disguise for the basic boy-meets-girl situation is found in such works as Edwards' "A Game of Chess" (1858) (fig.345), Siddal's "Lady affixing a pennant to a Knight's spear" (early 1850's) (fig.33) and, particularly, in the fancies of Solomon, who seems to have been especially fond of ringing the changes of period on the romantic couple, as in "The Gamester" (1857) (fig.346) which takes Shakespeare as its authority: "Tis better to be lowly born, and range with humble lovers in content, than to be perked up in glistening grief, and wear a golden sorrow." [272] The versatility of the romantic scene, in fact, attests to its supposedly universal occurence and appeal, to the mid-century period: in Solomon's work, the couple appears in ancient or modern dress, in domestic or foreign costume, while the scene can be made complex with a third party ("Love's Labour Lost", 1859, fig.347), onlookers ("Love's Disguise," 1866, fig.348) or the couple can even be satirised ("A Fashionable Couple", undated, fig.349); it can be given a literary excuse (Setchel .'s "The Momentous Question", 1842, fig.350), a topical application (Jerichau's "Wounded Danish Soldier", 1870, fig.351), or an ostensibly different subject (Emily Maciron's "Spinning", 1861: "a Breton interior with a peasant girl and her lover"). [273]

The common assumption, that these works accept, that the securing of a romantic partner (preferably for life) was the principal business of a single woman - and these works, in prioritising the female, emphasise that it is her business, though mid-Victorian society recognised that men had a part to play in the games of romance - was questioned more in real life at the time, than in art, apparently. The satirical tone of Solomon's "Fashionable Couple" and the complexities of the Claxtons' romantic drawings, are conspicuous by their less than total acceptance of the genre's emotional norms. The seriousness with which "A romance in a boarding house" (London Society, 1866, fig.169) takes the subtleties of romance, the sauciness of "Miss Leslie's Song" (London Society, 1866, fig.352), the underlying romantic interest of some of the drawings in the "Five Senses" (figs.353/7) series (Illustrated Times, 1867) show the two

Claxtons displaying romance in its uneven complexity, in a way that few paintings by women in the genre manage to do. A greater source than art of romantic fancies was literature, especially for consumption by women of the period, [274] and the graphic artist's connection with written romance, as an illustrator, perhaps gave her a wider repertoire of romantic moods and incidents to play with than the painter was apt to develop. Adelaide Claxton, for instance, had to produce eleven drawings for London Society's serial "Riddles of Love (figs. 358/9) which ran throughout 1870, and taken together they form a wide range of expressions of the romantic, modest though they are in aesthetic terms and unevenly achieved artistically.

A classic romantic motif, on which painters and illustrators converged, was the Valentine. There was an oil painting by Bertha Farwell called "St. Valentine's Day" exhibited at the Academy in 1859; a historical drawing on the subject by MEE appeared in the Illustrated Times in 1864 (fig.360); Florence Claxton provided two comic versions of the theme for the same paper, in 1863 (fig.361) and 1866 (fig.362); Edith Dunn (Hume) illustrated a story called "The two Valentines" (fig.363) for London Society in 1866, while a romantic drawing by the two Claxtons (fig.364) appeared in its pages one year later, and the same paper carried a very interesting treatment of the motif by MEE as an illustration to the poem "The black shepherd, a Valentine extravaganza" (fig.365) in 1865. [275]

Also fit to be discussed under the heading of the romantic fancy picture are those works in which romance can be taken in its less specific sense, of implying an imaginative concept associated with love and sentimental passion, but not necessarily concerned directly with sexual encounter. Jane Bowkett's "In an ornamental Garden" (fig.366) and "Young Lady in a Conservatory" (fig.367) (both undated), Anna Charretie's "What shall be my song tonight?", (fig. 368) and most of the known works of Emma Sandys (whether styled "Woman in a yellow dress" (fig. 261) or "A Saxon Princess" (fig. 262) [276] come into this category, for they present images which are meant to be appreciated for their sexual attraction and the vague fictional associations which they carry, and promote (even if the

dress of the figure is modern) an otherwordliness which is romantic insofar as it is non-realistic, emphasised by the figures' isolation. The figures in such pictures are invariably female - a circumstance which bespeaks the relative inequality of range of motif for male and female artists; for male artists evidently consider male and female characters and experience equally available to them (and, indeed, show a curious preference for using female characters rather than their own male selves as vehicles for their ideas), whereas the female artist very evidently considered (or was made to feel) that her characters should be people like herself, thus giving the impression that she saw men as out of bounds as protagonists. This can be read as refreshingly modest, in the light of the male artist's habitual arrogation of the whole world to his use; or as faint-hearted, accepting the conventional limitations of womanly subject-matter. Whichever, it must mean that the works are ensured a greater authenticity than works which presume to discuss people and experiences unknown, in real terms, to their authors.

Within this genre, the range of quality which such works achieve can be suggested by a comparison between an undated picture by one Alice Laird called "Fastening her Bow" (fig.369) and Anderson's "The Studio" (fig.370) (1885) or Osborn's "Golden Daydream" (1877) (fig. 371).[277] If an artist of talent and insight applied herself to such a type, the result could be beautiful though inconsequential; if a lesser artist produced the same type of work, the result appeared simply trivial. There were evidently many such works on the walls at Society of Female Artists exhibitions throughout the period. The single, female figure whose only aim is to look lovely and conjure up some nebulously agreeable association with love or poetry, went under all sorts of title, often, it must be suspected, in an effort to aggrandise what was, in the end, a figure study, anonymous portrait, or exercise in drapery and colour. Critical comment alone, would lead one to disparage the majority of such works, but without seeing the works themselves no confident conclusion can be reached as to whether the recurrent complaints of critics at such pictures were a result of their ubiquitousness or their universal inferiority. This issue came up with specific reference to the use of literary ideas,

so will be better discussed as an aspect of women's work in the literary genre, but it is appropriate to remark here, that the romantic fancy picture was so often attempted by women, and so often spoiled by them, because it stood for feeling - which women were supposed to have in abundance, - yet it only worked on competence - which women had in very uneven measure. A romantic fancy picture should have been women artists' forte, according to convention, yet because to be successful it, in fact, relied on a command of anatomy, a sense of variety and drama, and a knowledge of history and literature and a wide knowledge of human experience, women artists were less well equipped than their male colleagues to succeed in the genre. Pictures of female figures sitting, reading, sighing, or walking [278] were genuinely appealing to the sentimental and non-intellectual minds of many women artists, but they needed something more than the subject to render them substantial works of art. A male artist could perhaps get away with as simple a subject, if he displayed adequate technical skills; women, until the latter end of the period, could often not muster those, so the essentially slight nature of the romantic fancy picture came resoundingly through in many of their forays into the genre. It is interesting to note, in conclusion, here - and the point will be returned to - that romance had such an appeal for women artists that they applied it to other genres, which were considered much higher than the romantic fancy picture - thus either calling for a realignment of the dividing lines between, say, the history picture and the romantic picture, or else leaving many women's works floundering between two or more stools, undefined.

Literary pictures

Certain subject pictures tended to be narrative pictures: these were the literary, the religious, the historical, and the epic work, with an understanding that the term applied particularly to the first of these types. Indeed, the narrative work finds itself most fully, surely, in the literary picture, since story-telling is an activity which painting has borrowed from verbal means of expression. This is a particularly interesting genre in which to attempt some

assessment of women's work, since their education did not, by and large, fit them for the execution of it [279] in the way that men were fitted for the working of literary themes, yet the vogue for the literary picture was so central a trend in the period that the subject painter could not afford to shun it. The work of female artists in this genre upheld certain general trends (the especial predilection for Shakespearean subjects, for instance, and the favouritism for Walter Scott and Tennyson as sources) but seems to have broken new ground on other counts: their favoured characters or indidents might well often be different from those recurrent in male painters' works, for instance. Aspects of the painter's approach to literature which seem important to bear in mind include, whence the range of heroes or heroines is drawn, and for what reasons are they found interesting; are the sources necessarily familiar to the artist; do artists choose a consistent type of character or incident, regardless of the source - it may be impossible to answer those questions comprehensively, but to ask them is relevant to establishing the character of women's activity within the genre.

To start with Shakespeare only reflects the importance of this source for artists in the period. [280] Certain plays were clearly more popular with women artists than others: "As You Like It" and "Romeo and Juliet" stand out as much-repeated subjects, with Rosalind and Celia and the eponymous lovers forming the precise subject of many pictures. In the former case, treatments that stood out in their own time included MEF's "Rosalind and Celia" (fig.372) shown at Suffolk Street in 1862 (Edwards also showed an "As You like it" at the Academy in 1864, and a "Hermia" in 1869); and in the latter case, Lucy Madox Brown's "Romeo and Juliet at the Tomb" (fig.264), a large watercolour shown at the Dudley in 1871, a fine example of Pre-Raphaelite Shakespearianism. [281] It seems almost as if an attempt at either of these two sources was a prerequisite for the artist who wanted to establish herself as a serious painter, for Osborn, Robbinson, Jerichau, Gillies, and Laura Herford (as well as Fanny Corbaux among their 'older sisters') all showed a work dealing with "As You Like It" or "Romeo and Juliet" at some time in the

period, even if they showed no other Shakespearian subject at all.[282] It is unfortunately impossible to tell from critical descriptions whether they took similar or disparate forms. Apart from Rosalind, Celia, Romeo and Juliet, the most often treated Shakespearian character among women was Miranda, with Ophelia, Hermia and Helena close behind. Mirandas took a variety of forms: "Miranda" (Mrs. J.H. Carter, 1868), "Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess" (L.M. Brown, 1872), "Prospero and Miranda" (Gillies, 1874), "Miranda" (Mrs. Moseley, 1862), "Miranda and Ferdinand" (Austin Carter, 1870), "Miranda" (Mary H. Johnson, 1845).[283] The heroines were chosen whose appeal was more romantic than heroic, for Lady Macbeth, Portia, Desdemona, Cleopatra, made relatively infrequent appearances: these included "Lady Macbeth" by Mrs. Criddle (1839) "Lady Macbeth" by Julia Pocock (1872), "Portia planning Antonio's defence" by Gillies (1855), "Portia" by Ellen Montalba (1868), "Desdemona and Emilia" by Juliana Russell (1865), "Othello and Desdemona" by Robbinson (1858), "Cleopatra taking the asp" by Clara Kettle (1865) and "Cleopatra" by the same artist (1850) - the former a painting on ivory and the latter a watercolour -,"Cleopatra" by Austin Carter (1868).[284] Imogen, from "Cymbeline" is, to modern observers, a more surprisingly popular choice: though she appeared with nothing like the frequency of Miranda, she was treated by substantial artists when she did occur: "Imogen after Posthumus' departure" by Gillies (1860), "Imogen" by Solomon (1865), "Imogen" by Starr (1873, fig.373).[285]

This range of protagonists is in contrast to the conspicuous bias in male artists' work for Ophelia,[286] and also suggests the contrast in treatment which women's work bore to men's, in their preferences for characters rather than scenes from a play. This latter point will be returned to below, but as for the former, it can be seen that heroines were much more to female artists' taste than heroes; even where the female character was intimately linked, in the source, with a male figure, he rarely appeared along with her in the artist's treatment. Thus, Ophelia appeared more often alone than with Hamlet, Titania appeared unaccompanied by Oberon, Juliet appeared alone (although Romeo did not.) Similarly, other female characters from

Shakespeare often provided the subject for a picture - "Octavia" (Austin Carter, 1869), "Gertrude" (Eliza Turck, 1857), "Viola" (Emma Sandys, undated, fig.260), "Charmian" (C. Babb, 1875) [287] - but a parallel use of male characters is not detectable. Rather, heroes appear in a couple or group: "Lucentio, Hortensio and Bianca" (Mrs. Criddle, 1831), "Falstaff and Mrs. Ford" (Ambrosini Jérôme, 1844), "The departure of Poncet and his brother" (Julia Meiklam, 1857), "Ioachim stealing the bracelet from Imogen" (Jérôme, 1856), "The Meeting of Florizel and Perdita" (Emily Macirone, 1858). [288] In this last work, the man seems to be important but not, even here, to dominate:

> "This is painted from the passage in the Winter's Tale, wherein Florizel blesses the day when his falcon flew into the grounds of the father of Perdita. The scene is a section of woodland, with forest trees, beneath one of which Perdita is sitting, and Florizel appears." 289

Within these Shakespearean works, as in other subject categories, the single-figure composition of romantic character seems to predominate; this tendency was commented on by the Athenaeum critic of the SFA exhibition of 1868, suggesting a misuse of the literary source on the artists' part:

> "It is a pity the managers of this gathering do not exclude that large class of life studies with sentimental names which occurs year by year:- "Shadowy, dreaming Adeline", Mr. Tennyson, by Miss E. Royal; "La Belle dame sans merci" by Miss Lane; "Evil forebodings" by Miss Burgess; and "Miranda" by Mrs. J.H. Carter. This is a weak and purposeless class." 290

This was not the first time this writer had reproached the women thus; the year before he had written:

> "One or two designs without numbers or references in the Catalogue must not be overlooked by us. These are by Miss Thornycroft, evidently the

> work of a tyro of great promise, and as yet imperfect training, who does not seem to 'know her own mind' as folks say; if otherwise, how could she style a capital, but incompletely drawn head of a handsome girl, "Ever-varying Madelaine"?" 291

The same complaint specifically applied, is found with reference to MEE's "Hermia" of 1869. The Times critic said: "Why does Mrs. Freer repeat in her 'Hermia', in both head, figure and drapery, the same graceful model she displayed two years ago in the very same attitude, on a tiger's skin?" [292] That picture itself, "Tenderness" had been questioned by the same critic for its meaning: "Miss MEE's 'Tenderness' shows us the graceful figure of a very pretty young lady extended on a couch, with a little child playing on a tiger's skin at her side, but the relation of title to subject is hardly apparent.."[293] Indeed, returning to "Hermia", another critic's description of it seems to offer no real justification for the title: "a sweet and graceful Hermia, of a Midsummer Might's Dream, sleeping on a bank, with glow-worm light softly burning about her head." [294]

As hinted at above, when beginning to account for women's work in the range of subject pictures, the tendency was to simplify the image: to evoke rather than elaborately describe a source. This was not, necessarily, a misuse of that source. The inability or lack of confidence to tackle a scene from a literary source which many artists of the second rank display, in preferring to attempt an image from that source, may not be misplaced; it was, surely, the artist's ability which the critics were commenting upon, not the pictorial form's validity: for the women criticised by the Art Journal reviewer had, presumably, made weak or unconvincing images, which were unredeemable by a clever title; Edwards/Freer had made an image of conviction and style, which was not well-served by a clever title. For, on other occasions, the same type of picture could be praised (admittedly by other critics): Eliza Martin's "Evangeline" of 1864, for instance, was greeted thus by the Athenaeum critic:

> "Miss Martin's two studies of character-heads are remarkable for good drawing, expression

> and dextrous modelling... The first entitled Evangeline, show a bright blonde girl of twenty... The expression is pathetic, without sentimentality." 295

Similarly, Turck's "Sylvia" of 1871: "a half-length of Shakespeare's sweet damsel 'full of sorrows', is extremely apt and very prettily, as well as carefully, painted." [296] While Edwards' similar format of an attractive female figure set in a fanciful context was quite acceptable under the less particularised title of "Evening":

> "Miss Ellen Edwards has discovered the secret of painting light to perfection. The spark of the glowworm in her "Evening" catches the eye from any part of the room with intense reality. The drawing of the figure is graceful, and the colour excellent." 299

The spirit in which innumerable heads, half lengths, and studies of female figures were aggrandised by the attachment of literary titles, was not a temptation into which only female artists fell, [298] and is indicative, as much as it is of anything, of the contemporary audience's demand for narrative.

> "Modern Art, unlike that of older days, owes much to literature, which now appears to be in no small degree the mainspring of the painter's action. It is just the same in the great continental schools as with us; and so a class of historical or semi-historical subjects has opened up, almost entirely, or but very little, adopted by the old masters of Art - a class which, when allied with domestic scenes, forms the staple of artistic-work in our exhibition-galleries." 299

declared a writer in the Art Journal in 1871. This is almost caricaturally evidenced by the high incidence of subjects from the Vicar of Wakefield in the London galleries in the 1850's and '60's: female artists provided their share of these - "Illustrations to the Vicar of Wakefield" (Juliana Russell, 1869), "Olivia" (Osborn, 1868), "Olivia and Sophia in their Sunday finery" (Robbinson, 1859) [300] -

but their ubiquitous source was rather Tennyson. His characters Adeline, Mariana (from both poems featuring that name) and, to a lesser extent, Maud, Dora, Ida and Cecilia, along with the four figures of "Idylls of the King", formed a large proportion of the populations of the SFA exhibitions, and were frequently to be found in women's contributions to other galleries also. Adelines from the 1850's and '60's included works by Lizzie Chilman (1859), Mrs. Swift (1869), Emma Sandys (1867, fig. 262), Edith Dunn/Hume (1867) and Elizabeth Royal (1868: the work mentioned above, "Shadowy, dreaming Adeline"). [301] The long-suffering Mariana took more varied forms, if one is to judge by titles: "Tennyson's Mariana" (Adelaide Burgess, 1858), "Mariana in the South" (Jane Egerton, 1852), "Marianna" (Amelia Edwards, 1860), "Mariana in the moated Grange" (Ellen Brock, 1868), with Marianas by Bartholomew (1854), Sandys (1867, fig. 263), Starr (1868) and Ward (1857). [302] His May Queen made some appearances (e.g. Ward's "May Queen" of 1865), but more interesting is the appeal of "The Princess", dealing as the poem does with the character of woman. Pictures by women from this source included Gillies' "The students" shown at the Academy in 1856: the Athenaeum critic gives some idea of its character, if not of its details:

> "Miss Gillies, who has attained extreme finish, though serious, earnest, and thoughtful, is rather heavy with her 'students', who are not dramatic or individualised. The lady tells what she has to say with a deep solemn voice; but she is rather prosy. There is a little of the fashionable religious novel in these unreal but respectable beings. Sisters watching tombstones, mothers rapturous beside cradles, and students ecstatic about the moon, are all very well, but will not interest in these days!" 303

Whom such subjects did not interest is debatable: certainly other women artists showed an interest in the subject, among them Agnes Fraser in her "Sweet and Low" (1867) and Augusta Wells in her "One of Ida's Pupils" (1864). [304]

A less rigorous Tennyson heroine, however, who proved from the

evidence of exhibition catalogues to be more popular than Ida, is Elaine, from the "Idylls of the King". Her companions in that work, Enid and Guinevere, were also popular subjects (e.g. Mrs. Charretie's "Enid", 1873 and Julia Joy's "Queen Guinever's dream", 1866), [305] though their sister Vivien was conspicuous by her absence. Elaine, in particular, was the subject of major pictures, by Jopling (1876, fig.374), Anderson, (1871, fig.126), Osborn (1864) and Ellen Montalba (1879), and gave a theme to many lesser works, including Austin Carter's two treatments of the character in 1868, a piece by Amy Butts in the same year, and E.F. Strong's "Elaine bearing the slave token to Lancelot" and Miss Miles' "Lily Maid of Astolat" of 1860. [306] The Society of Female Artists exhibition of 1868 contained so many Elaines that the Art Journal's critic was moved to exclaim: "Poor 'Elaine', is she yet, season after season, to suffer more at the hands of tyros? Female artists seem to have a weakness for this ready-made sentiment. In kindness the painters shall be nameless who have desecrated the Laureate's verse." [307]

Tennyson was also used, as was Shakespeare, for titles, which might have no particularised bearing on the work, but carry a sentiment which the artist deemed appropriate. Thus, Boyce/Wells' "No joy the blowing season brings" (1858, fig.375) or Florence Claxton's "Moved On" (1867). [308] A quotation or literary tag seemed to give weight or meaning to a scene or image that was not necessarily at all illustrative of the source, and therefore not properly a literary picture. In practice, the eloquent title often meant that the work let the spectator's expectations down, thereby doing the picture no good at all, and critical reactions lead one to think that women artists suffered particularly from this, since the fact that the literary title was a prop for a picture that would not stand on its own, seems to have been lamentably obvious in many too many cases. [309]

Most conspicuous of other literary sources was Walter Scott: the Art Journal recognised this influence approvingly in 1858, saying: "One thing...is certain: the fact that, although a quarter of a century has elapsed since his death, his writings have not lost, in the slightest degree, their hold on public favour, nor the brilliancy of

his genius been questioned." [310] It is interesting to note, though, that, in engraving MEE's 1863 painting "Catherine Glover and the Glee Maiden" (fig.316), the Illustrated London News thought fit to remind its readers of the source narrative, saying: "..we suspect that some of our readers, whose novel-reading days are, like our own, retiring into the dim past, may have a rather hazy recollection of the incident represented." [311] A later writer paints the effect of Scott's hold over narrative painters very black, however:

> "The most pernicious influence on the painters of this period was that of a single man, not a painter or even interested in painting, but a writer of romances. Costume painting or romantic landscape painting, as inspired by the numerous works of Sir Wlater Scott, dominated everything from the 1820's onwards... Scott wrote whole chapters on end to read like costume-pictures: painters filled fourteen-foot canvasses to look like Scott's descriptions." 312

No female artist painted a single fourteen-foot canvas on a Scott subject: it was rather the intimate, poetical or dramatic figure scene which women produced on Scott subjects. They concerned themselves rather with "Ivanhoe" and "The Bride of Lammermuir" than with "Rob Roy" and "Red gauntlet". Effie and Jennie Deans were favourite Scott characters, from "The Heart of Midlothian", supported by Catherine Glover and the Glee Maiden, from "The Fair Maid of Perth", Rowena from "Ivanhoe" and Lucy Ashton from "The Bride of Lammermuir". Just as with Shakespeare, the literary source was ransacked for heroines above all other motifs. The incident or drama in which these female characters are shown engaged is often less exciting than a knowledge of their literary context would lead the spectator to expect: although MEE's "Catherine Glover and the Glee Maiden" (1863) is an exciting and active scene, and Jessie McLeod's Art-Union prize-winning "The Arrest of Effie Deans" (1853) sounds dramatic, surely typical of many of these subject-works is Jane Bowkett's late (1884) "Lucy Ashton" (fig.377) in which the painting presents nothing, really, but a female icon, in the romantic fancy picture mode, lovely though it is. An acknowledgement that it is really a passion for

romance rather than an interest in literature which characterises (and generalises) such works (perhaps especially Scott-inspired pieces), is given by the Builder's critic in discussing the aforementioned Edwards piece "Catherine Glover...", though the discussion clearly redounds to the artist's credit:

> ".. Miss Edwards, who appropriately assists us in elucidating the capability of ewen old, worn materials being made acceptable by novel treatment... the strict propriety of costume and the elegance of the composition and production, with considerable brilliancy of colour, render it a very attractive performance, indeed, upholding classic romance as an inexhaustible source, at a time when a hat and bonnet, black coat and bo-peep fever promise (sic) to shut it up quite." 314

Dickens, among contemporary authors, was a favourite, though the particular images and incidents drawn from his writings were not various - from Jane Campbell Bell's "Little Dombey" (1857) and Charlotte Henderson's "Little Dorrit" (1858) to Rebecca Solomon's "Behind the Curtain" (1858), with a special niche for "The Old Curiosity Shop"'s Nell and "David Copperfield"'s Emily: "Poor Nell" (Clara Cawse, 1852), "Nell at the Window" (McIan, 1842), "Nell in the Churchyard" (Emily Macirone, 1859), "Little Nell" (Frances Rossiter, 1863) and "Emily in Italy" (Charlotte Babb, 1865) 315 the appeal is evidently his juveniles, in all their innocent adversity.

A nice point, with literary source material, is to work out whether the precise literary form of the original in any way determines the painterly end product: with women's work, a general rule of thumb seems to be that drama and the novel produce more dramatic work than poetry, which tends to result in 'poetical' pieces: heads, single images, simple forms, with an emphasis on sentiment. (That said, one would immediately have to point out that Anderson's "Elaine", for instance, is a fine andrich, though it may be a poetical painting, and that all those works which cannot vouch for themselves because they have not been located in modern times, might resoundingly

contradict that tentative generalisation.) Poetical sources additional to Tennyson which made some mark within women's literary work, were Longfellow, particularly Evangeline (fig. 131), and Wordsworth, with, surprisingly, Byron.[316] One would have thought much of Byron's poetry proscribed reading for young women of the 1850's, but he occurs as a reference as often as Longfellow, though less frequently than Dickens. The works in question are unique occasions of the artist's choosing a Byronic source, and usually take from the poet what women artists have been seen to primarily take from all their literary sources: heroines. A.S. Daniel's head of "Her frolic grace Fitz-Fulke", shown at the British Institution in 1853, was commented on thus by the Spectator: "a female head, painted with dashing freedom by Miss A.S.W. Daniel, who, in strong-minded fashion, has had recourse to Don Juan for a title..."[317]. Backhouse's "Edith, from Byron" was shown at the SFA in 1858, along with Mrs. Hurlstone's "Gulnare and Conrad" and A. Jervis' "England's eldest Daughter". Curiously enough, the same year saw Jane Campbell Bell's "Death of the Giaour" at Suffolk Street, presumably a more challenging extract from the source than the former works; also such would be Austin Carter's 1871 "Scene from the Due Foscari", with its accompanying quotation implying a heated exchange between Marina, the Doge, and Loredano, at the SFA.[318]

Once in the realms of Byron, one is surely approaching the epic or heroic genre, as when Goethe or Homer are the source. Yet artists can easily produce the humblest of genre scenes from Shakespearean sources, and romantic fancy pictures from the Classics (as is evidenced by Alma Tadema, later in the century, for all his science); especially, it seems, when those artists are female. However, justice must be done to those women who did make noble pictures out of grand sources. Howitt's scene from "Faust" was evidently such an incidence, as would Boyce/Wells' "Gretchen" (fig.378) no doubt have been, had she not left it unfinished at her death. "Faust" was also the inspiration for Mrs. Clarendon Smith's "Margaret" (1872) and Bridell-Fox's "Gretchen" (1863) and Robbinson's "Margaret and Lizzy with pitchers at the Fountain" (1857).[319] A French guest at the SFA, Madame O'Connell, showed "Faust and Margaret" there in 1862,

though critical reaction did not note whether it was markedly better or otherwise different from British women's Faustian works.[320] The choice of such a source as Goethe did not, of course, necessarily bestow the skill and insight commensurate with such an elevated source, and not infrequently women were criticised for ambition which outstripped their technical ability. This happened often in instances where the artist had given a classical reference (Louise Swift's "Lesbia" (1868) was simply noted by the Art Journal critic: "The face of pretty Lesbia has been fairly well managed by Miss L. Swift in the flesh tints"; Marie Spartali's "Theban Poetess" (1867) was thus noticed by the Saturday Review critic: "Miss Marie Spartali, in her "Corinna", gives us once more the tiresome old ugly face, and the red disorderly hair"[321]) and the work was not grand enough nor accomplished enough to support the solemn connotation of the title.

The literary narrative genre also had room for individual characters from fiction who had a vogue, though their creator might not be particularly popular with either artists or public. The figure of Undine, for instance, from De La Motte Fouqué, enjoyed a distinct fashion - William Vaughan establsihes it as one of the most popular subjects from German literature to appear in the London exhibitions between 1815 and 1860, among artists of both sexes - which, among women artists, occurred in pictures by Starr (1870, fig.380), Boyce/ Wells, (1861, fig.381), Emma Sandys (1873) and Mary H. Johnson (1849).[322]

Female artists did not markedly draw from female writers, though, as has been seen, they did take from their sources what might be termed the feminine elements. Among modern literary sources, though, are found the names of Jean Ingelow, Felicia Hemans and Christina Rossetti (while Agned Strickland was often the quoted authority for historical works.)[323] It is surprising that female authors such as Eliot, Gaskell and Braddon were not chosen for depiction by women artists more than they apparently were: Brownlow's albums contain sketches from Hetty and the Squire out of "Adam Bede" (fig.382), but she seems not to have made an exhibited painting out of them; while Eliot herself, in a letter to William Allingham in 1877, recalled

a work by Gertrude Martineau on a subject of hers: "Miss Martineau I believe made a pretty thing, exhibited at the Dudley Gallery, out of Romola finding little Lillo on the sunshiny pavement. But her picture was not memorable enough to make a reason against repeating the subject." [324], but the well-known painterly depictions of Eliot subjects are not by female artists. [325] Female illustrators visualised the writings of other women, but not seemingly by any design: MEE was often an illustrator of Mrs. Molesworth's stories (fig.383), while Helen Paterson (Allingham) was the artist for Margaret Oliphant's "Innocent" (fig.140) in the Graphic early in 1873; but equally, MEE illustrated Anthony Trollope's "The Claverings" (fig.384) in the Cornhill in 1867 and Charles Lever's "That Boy of Northcott's" (fig.385) for the same magazine two years later, while Paterson visualised Victor Hugo's "Quatre-vingt-treize" (fig.386) and Thomas Hardy's "Far From the Madding Crowd" (respectively, in the Graphic, 1874, and the Cornhill, 1874.) [326]

A more exact equivalent for the illustrator of the literary painting was the illustrated book, such as "Pictures of the Year", the volumes published by Cundall, Baxter, etc., wherein a number of artists each illustrated a verse or poem. Female artists were not conspicuous in this field, but instances of their work include Ward's "An English Rosebud" (fig.136) in Ward Lock's "Beauties of Poetry and Art" (1865), MEE's "Patriotism" (fig.387) in Frederick Warne's "Nobility of Life: its graces and virtues" (187?), Lucette Barker's three plates in Bell's "Poetry of the Year" (1853): "Olivia under the Talking Oak", "The Princess" and "Children in Spring" (entitled "Come forth oh ye children of gladness!" (fig.177) in the reprint of 1867) and EMB's "The redbreast pays his annual visit" (fig.388) in the same volume (1867). Of the older generation of female artists working in the mid-century period, Carpenter, Fanny Corbaux and three of the Sharpe sisters (Eliza, Maria and Louisa) had done such work in the 1830's and '40's, (fig.389) [327]

The literary picture, having such fundamental popularity as a form in the period, could become an almost eternal image in the popular mind, in an individual case. This occurred with Sarah Setchell's drawing

of 1842, "The Momentous Question" (fig.350) (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum), illustrating one of Crabbe's "Tales of the Hall". A companion piece, "The Heart's Resolve", from another Crabbe Tale, "Jesse and Colin" was published in 1850 as a sequel plate, but the popularity of the first haunted the artist: "Jesse and Colin" was assessed with reference to the "Momentous Question" -

> "In Miss Setchel's 'Jesse and Colin' we have another 'Momentous Question' without the depth of dramatic sentiment which that work displayed - and showing that in her first production she owed much of her success to the felicity of the subject..."

> "Miss Setchel, who some years ago made a permanent reputation by her 'Momentous Question', but who apparently only shines at intervals, comes forward with great force in this exhibition. She again has recourse to her old favourite, Crabbe..." 328

- and in 1857, the Illustrated London News critic lamented her continued abstention from exhibition with: "By the Way, where is Miss Setchel? - it is becoming a Momentous Question." [329] Her last work of a literary character (she exhibited landscape in the 1850's and '60's) to gain any notice, "And ye shall walk in silk attire" (1866, fig.390) was still referred to her first 'hit': "(has) truth and breadth... quite equal to a repetition of the success of her 'Momentous Question'." [330]

Setchel's drawings, like any work within the literary narrative genre, are illustrative, and therefore strictly speaking derivative, which means not complete and whole, somehow: "illustration, like translation is traditionally considered a minor art, one essentially derivative from primary works and one in which evidence of imaginative transformations has often been seen as a flaw." [331] Yet the literary narrative was a genre well thought of and well-liked in the period, and allowed great works to be produced within it. Whether the fact that so few of women's works within the genre have survived indicates that it was not a genre in which they produced any great works is risky to conjecture; but what can be concluded with certainty is that,

if so, it certainly was not for want of trying, although the explorations they made within the genre were apparently more wide than deep.

Religious narratives

Although Victorian art - like Victorian society - was informed with a fundamentally Christian set of ethics, the religious narrative picture was not very frequent, in a period that was to become increasingly sceptical. Rather than portraying a Biblical seene or lesson (pace Holman Hunt), artists tended to express their religious conviction in the pious or sentimental scene of God-fearing individuals. The religious picture which presented itself unequivocally as such, had immense status, however, similar to the status of a heroic or epic work, [332] and this put it to some degree beyond the reach of the run of women artists, who would have had more access to the portrayal of religious sentiment than religious drama.

Despite the existence of female saints in the Christian church's doctrine, and such figures as Joan of Arc, the relation of women to religion was seen more as a feeling than a doing one. Hence, the successful attempt at a heroic religious work by a female artist was something a little remarkable. The case of Edith Courtauld (later Arendrup) is interesting: Clayton recounts the early high level of her artistic ambition:

> "her father had built for her a good studio in a field adjoining the garden, and here she made splendid beginnings on enormous canvases - all eight or ten feet long - working madly, or passing despairing hours crouched on the floor in a corner, face turned towards the wall, weeping tears of anguish and mortification. The names of these early attempts will sufficiently indicate the bent which her artistic power was taking as the girlish mind grew and developed. "Dante's first entrance into Hell", "Destruction of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea", "Man's Strife, God's Peace"..." [333]

A work called "Dawn: the Death of Moses on Mount Pisgah", made in

1865/6, Clayton describes as "though full of faults in drawing, from insufficient study of the figure, was a marked advance, and formed a turning-point in the painter's career." The religious narrative was obviously fundamentally important to the young artist, but it is equally clear that it was the drama and heroicism of such material which appealed to her. When she exhibited such works, this was acknowledged, though her early fervour seems to have been chastened somewhat by the time her finished pictures saw the light of exhibition:

> ""Memories of the first Palm Sunday": a picture the execution of which is conventional and severe even to ascetisicm, is remarkable for pathos, dignity, and originality of design. It is a noble and very grave work, with nothing in its execution to mar the impression it makes." 334

The motif of this painting was described by Clayton as "a group of women who had loved their dear Lord, and after His crucifixion went and gathered up, as memorials, the palm branches that, a few days before, had been strewn at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem." The following year, two figure pictures, a half-length of the virgin Mary contemplating the crown of thorns and a Peter after denying Christ, were noticed in similar terms as being "solemn conceptions".[33] The "First Palm Sunday" was hung on the line at the Academy and was bought by the Melbourne National Gallery; in 1873, the artist painted a pendant to it, "Twilight on Mount Calvary", which was apparently less successful, and after that exhibited rather landscapes (she went to live in Egypt) than figure pictures.

Clayton suggests that Courtauld's preference for the religious picture was a reflection of the artist's beliefs: "By nature deeply devotional, she united these art struggles with religious aspirations and vague yearnings;.. the weary heart found rest within the Catholic Church." Whether such sentiments are necessary to the production of good religious works is arguable: it was the case in the early part of this period, at least, that a vehement Catholic faith was to be mistrusted - not to say rejected - but that a sober

and measured, though firm, Protestant belief was a fine thing to find evidenced in an artist's work.[336] Such latter feeling seems to have informed the work of Jane Benham (later Benham Hay), who showed "A Story of Faith" at the Academy in 1849, "Tobias restoring the eyesight of Tobit" in 1861, and "The reception of the Prodigal Son" in 1862; her other works, at the Academy and elsewhere, testify to the description of her as "grave and enthusiastic" by Henry Vizetelly, though they are not explicitly religious in theme.[337] She seems, from critical descriptions of these works (none of which has apparently survived), however, to have been as much taken with the spirit of religious art as with religion itself: "Tobit" (exhibited with "Cloister of the Convent of San Domenico") was criticised thus by the Athenaeum and Illustrated London News critics: "Two pictures which promise greatly of her artistic success when she shall have outgrown a taste for mere asceticism, which is not good Art, any more than monasticism is good morality"; "... impressive manner, with great correctness of drawing, an eye to harmonious colouring, and a true feeling for the classic style of art."[338] While the "Prodigal Son" of the following year was rebuked in the Athenaeum for its "mere quaintness, here an affectation, of the early Italian schools..."[339]

That these works were unusual from a woman's hand - whether or not they still left something to be desired - was recognised by critics; with "Tobit" and the "Cloister", Benham was, according to the Times reviewer,

> "one of several honourable evidences this year how thoroughly our female painters have studied, and how high they can reach both in conception and workmanship... Time has been when a picture like this from a woman's hand would have excited a furore of astonishment. Now Miss Hay, like Mrs. Wells, or Mrs. Bridell, or the Misses Mutrie, takes her rank unquestioned, and is judged among the painters of the year, without indulgence asked or given to sex."[340]

While the same critic said when reviewing the "Prodigal Son" the next year: "it is most gratifying to see in a lady's work such

proof of hard and well-directed study." [341] Benham's major work came later: "A Florentine Procession" of 1867, will be discussed below, in the context of history pictures.

Another woman who treated Biblical subjects had different reasons for doing so: Fanny Corbaux, a generation earlier, was, in the words of the Englishwoman's Review, "a lady distinguished as an artist and as an investigator into many abstruse points of Biblical history." [342] Clayton amplifies this:

> "Miss Corbaux has gained a double reputation, being well known for her Biblical studies. At first she took up Scriptual researches as a recreation, but afterwards she wrote many valuable papers for different societies and periodicals. In the Athenaeum appeared her 'Letters on the Physical Geography of the Exodus'. In the Journal of Sacred Literature was published a curious history of the nation called in the Bible the Rephaim... A pension of thirty pounds per annum was granted to Miss Corbaux in 1870, in consideration of her researches in sacred literature and attainments in learned languages." 343

Though she was not known specifically as a religious artist, her Biblical drawings included "Hagar" (1849), "Hannah" (1852), "Miriam" (1852) and "Leah and Rachel" (1855). These, however, owed little to the artist's esoteric knowledge of the scriptures:

> "There is no exhibition room in which female talent and genius figure to such good effect as this. One of the screens alone shows them in, possibly, their highest contemporary manifestation.- This praise is due to the "Hannah" and "Miriam" of Miss Fanny Corbaux; - a pair of more graceful and thoughtful presentments of the "Women of Scripture" than, probably, ever before proceeded from female hand - the Elizabeth Siranis and Agnes Dolces and Angelika Kauffmanns not forgotten. To the former, it is true, the smallness of head might be objected; but this permitted to pass, as a piece of expression, aided by great judgment of taste, in what may be called its decorative accessories, - the figure demands no ordinary praise..." 344

A similar measure of esteem was enjoyed by Louisa Stuart, Lady Waterford, whose favourite subject-matter was religious: numerous watercolours and ink drawings from her hand attest to this, from "The education of the Virgin" (fig.392) to "The sleeping disciples" (fig.393), from "Feed my lambs" (fig.394) to "The earthly, heavenly choir". [345] Her pièce de résistance (figs.82/9) - she was considered, and considered herself, as discussed above, an amateur, not exhibiting in the commercial exhibitions - vividly confirmed her essential subject preference:

> "The Marchioness of Waterford, one of the ablest of our amateur artists, is painting, in distemper, on twelve arched compartments on the walls of the schoolroom at Ford, Northumberland, a series of pictures representing boys and girls mentioned in the Bible. One subject is already done; it shows Cain and Abel, youths of ten or twelve years of age, sacrificing. The second subject is Isaac going to the sacrifice; the third, Esau selling his birthright; the fourth, Joseph and his brethren..." [346]

The others were Joshua, Daniel and the three children, Samuel and his parents, David the Shepherd, Moses and Miriam, Jesus with the Doctors, St. Paul at the feet of Gamaliel, and Christ blessing the children. In dimension and in form, this scheme attempted religious painting to meet the Italian Renaissance model, as did Benham's pictures in their way. Waterford does not succeed in her attempt, failing in technique rather than conception: her smaller scaled, watercolour images are dashingly and convincingly handled and manage an intimacy and a vivid poetry at the same time, (fig.392) whereas the schoolroom paintings look much less confident, the forms are less fluid, and the colours less alive. Of her motivation to paint both of these forms of religious picture, Mrs. Steuart Erskine wrote in 1910, describing the artist and her career in the Studio: "With her, art was the handmaid of Religion, and her talent was a gift which she was called upon to use in the cause of religion as a means of enforcing its doctrine." [347] The artist herself, in a letter quoted by the anonymous writer of a memoir

written in 1892, after her death, said:

> "It, the gift, is a <u>great</u> blessing to be thankful for; as such to be perfected as a talent, not hidden under a napkin (through the bane of indolence), but used and fructified as far as it can be in God's service - not for vanity and emulation or rivalry, but simply with thankfulness..." 348

Let not these statements be taken to mean that she had more faith than talent: her artistic skills attracted praise from Ruskin, Watts, Holman Hunt and many less luminous figures; in retrospect, parallels with Titan, Veronese and Giorgione seem to overstate the case, but her work still strikingly conveys the sentiments which it attempts and if her drawings are too much sketches or vignettes to be quite satisfying, the essential artistic gift is obviously there in them. 349

Waterford's drawings demonstrate the close relation religious narrative works could have to the epic picture, with almost uniformly grand concepts, and allegorical statements, emblematic figures in drapery, and Italianate sumbolism richly used (her work will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter), while religious painting's relation to the historical narrative is shown by the success of Starr's "David before Saul" (fig. 51) of 1867, the painting which won her the gold medal in the Academy Schools' competition that year. Thereby she became the first female student to win that honour, and the work became well-known because of this fact, and is not typical of the artist's oeuvre in subject-matter. 350

The prize it won was, in fact, as far as the Academy authorities were concerned, for the best <u>history</u> picture - there was no category of best religious picture - and critical reception shows in the vocabulary it used, how close were the qualities expected from a religious subject and required of a history picture:

> "There is very promising dignity of conception in Miss Starr's David... with the head of Goliath; and the style of the painting, if rather indeterminate, and not of the severest character, is entirely free from vulgarity."

"There is dignity in the design of "David brought before Saul" by this lady,... but its execution is so much apter to the subject of 'A Reverie' than to a scriptual theme, that we make it follow the less pretending work. A grand theme demands grand treatment, and a nobler style." 351

It is interesting to note that the second female student to win the gold medal for history painting, Jessie McGregor, won with a work which, if not illustrative of a biblical scene, certainly depicted a Christian virtue, "An Act of Mercy" (1871, fig.52). 352

The precise subjects to which women gave their attention within this genre varied considerably and do not admit of any categorisation at all. For instance Elizabeth Siddal painted watercolour versions of "The Marys at the Sepulchre", "The Holy Family", "The descent from the Cross" (all 1850's); Boyce/Wells left a sketch of an adoration of the shepherd (fig.395), and entitled one of her childish fancy pictures "Bird of God" (fig.317); Anderson exhibited a "Virgin and child" in 1855; Sophia Raincock showed an "Annunciation" at Suffolk Street in 1854; while the selection of particular biblical figures as subjects was frequent but varied, including Hagar, Ruth, Esther, St. Katharine, the Madonna, and, infrequently, male characters such as "Pharoah in the Red Sea" (Wedderburn/Blackburn, 1858), "The martyrdom of St. Luke (H. Thornycroft, 1878), "The infant Samuel" (Mme. Greata, 1860). 353 It should not be forgotten that much of women's energy for religious pictures went into copying . In the first ten years of the Society of Female Artists, only six original works which, by title, are indubitably religious, are to be found listed in the catalogues; these were Mary Ann Cole's "Hagar and Ishmael" (1858), Leila Hawkins' "The Infancy of Moses" (1858), F. Marter's "The Eight Beatitudes" (1858), Wedderburn/Blackburn's "Pharoah in the Red Sea" (1858), E.L.'s "Esther accusing Hamen" (1863), and Miss Jekyll's "Jehu" (1867). 354

A particular type from the range of religious imagery was conspicuous in women's work throughout the period: this was the figure of the nun, or sister of charity. It is hardly surprising that such a

character would be of special interest to female artists, but the frequency and variety of her appearance in their work, is. She appeared in straightforward form, as part of the trend which included Millais' "Vale of Rest" (1858/9), Collins' "Convent Thoughts" (1850) and Tennyson's "St. Agnes' Eve", [355] and integrated into narratives as a particularly colourful character (as in Osborn's "Lost" (1870) and Starr's "Sintram" (1873)). Her appeal lasts throughout the period: "Sisters of Mercy" (1850, Harriet Hillier), "The Nun full many a flower is born to blush unseen" (1850, Ellen Andrade), "The Sisters of Mercy" (1865, Blunden), "They cry peace, peace, Where there is no peace" (1864, Florence Claxton), "The likeness of a nun, I seemed to trace" (1867, Amy Butts), "Wandering Thoughts" (1870, Julia Pocock), "The Nun" (1872, Mrs. H. Campbell), "Convent Life" (1872, Anderson). [356] How many of these images of nuns actually addressed themselves to the moral and intellectual interest of the subject, is questionable. Two evidently very different treatments, from either end of the period, apparently did, though in neither case does the painting survive: in 1850, Emma Raimbach showed at the RA a work called "Portrait of a lady in the dress she wore on taking the habit of religion", with the following verse appended to it: "Forgot in the halls is that high-sounding name/For the Sister of Charity blushes at fame/Forgot are the claims of her riches and birth/For she barters for heaven the glory of earth"; equally dramatic (perhaps, if one saw the works, melodramatic) was Osborn's 1872 exhibit at Glasgow, "For Ever" which the Art Journal reviewed as follows:

> "Our old favourite, Miss Emily Osborn, leads us into the sanctum of convent life. There is a vague sense of solitude and sorrow in the nun's pallid countenance and fixed quiescence of figure, as she sits ruminating in her cell - "For Ever", as the name implies, shut out from all the interests of this m multiform world." [357]

The artist who achieved special identification with the nun motif, was a woman: this was Henriette Browne, who, though she employed the subject several times, was chiefly known for the "Sisters of Charity" shown at the International Exhibition in 1862 and exhibited

in London by Gambart two years earlier. The work depicted "a feverish child nursed by two Sisters of Mercy, while a third mixed some medecine" [358]; it had been bought by the French government, but through a series of circumstances found its way to Gambart, who also showed her "The Nun" in 1866. With reference to the earlier work, Charles Kingsley observed in 1863: "We have all seen nuns painted; nuns like ghosts, nuns like navigators, nuns like witches, nuns like nothing at all: but here are real nuns; and not mere nuns, but sisters of charity." [359] He declared it "a picture which I believe is destined to hold its place in the highest ranks of art as long as it exists."

Reviewing the later treatment of the theme, the Saturday Review critic noted the qualities which gave these pictures their conviction:

> "It is extremely simple, and would be a mere study were it not for the very high conception of purity and piety which it embodies. Madame Browne possesses, though in a far stronger and nobler way, that religious sentiment which in feebler forms has given popularity to so many artists. There is more strength and more true tenderness in two or three of this lady's works than in whole acres of pseudo-religious pictures they manufacture for the cathedrals of the Continent. Wherever one of her works is hung, a silent power is exercising itself perpetually, and leading people from frivolous desires and vain ambitions to the contemplation of lives whose activity is beneficent, and whose rest is intended to be a sacrifice. That these lives are higher than lives passed in mere amusement we cannot deny, and Madame Browne must have a greater moral influence than Horsley or Frith." [360]

(The praise these works received was due, not only to Browne's painterly skills, but also to the appeal of the subject - indicated by Kingsley above - for when the same artist showed a picture of a monk, "Le père Hyacinthe" in 1871, the critical reception was less enthusiastic and, in fact, in some instances, preferred to remember the earlier works:

""Portrait of a Monk" is a good specimen of a style in which the artist excels: she is apt in reading of character, and knows, as shown in this work, how to make carefully modelled hands help the general interest. Several small pictures in subject recall the "Sisters of Mercy", which made a popular sensation in the Exhibition of 1862." 361)

History painting

No such emblem as the nun features in women's history painting in the period: their heroes and heroines were various both in identity and in historical location. History painting was not a genre which women, at the beginning of the period, were well-equipped to undertake with hopes of great success, [362] but the prestige it possessed made it attractive to the artist whose preference lay in figure-painting and whose ambition inclined her towards serious themes. In assessing the success or failure of artists in the mid-Victorian period - whether male or female - it is well to remember the loaded dice of the hierarchy of genres. That is to say, that a successful artist within a higher-ranking genre will have been considered a better artist than one equally successful within a humbler genre. Thus, Henrietta Ward was placed lower within the ranks of history painters of both sexes than the Mutries were placed within the ranks of flower painters of both sexes, but because history painting had a higher rank than flower painting, their status was eventually equal. The quality of excellence (quality not being confused with degree) thus was as crucial as the quantity of excellence, which an artist displayed. When critics wanted to convey their ideas of the best in female art of the period, the names they recurrently used were those of artists attempting the 'higher' genres, [363] and it was evidently thought that if a woman could do well in history painting, this was irrefutably doing well: Samuel Carter Hall, of the Art Journal, remembered Ward as "the accomplished lady whose works take rank with those of any painter of either sex which the age has produced." [364]

The range of historical subjects that both painters and sculptors chose from in the mid-century lay, corresponding to the climate of

the time, largely within English history, specifically as it was achieved by individuals who displayed values acceptable to English 19th century morality. The history painting was, within the Reynolds tradition, based squarely on the depiction of heroes, whose greatness, whether of character or deed, was the message of the work; though applied by Reynolds to painting, this notion obviously allowed for a similar attitude in sculpture, also, though sculpture's means were different. Contemporary taste for hero worship, as Carlyle, the Palace of Westminster, and the Preraphaelite Brotherhood showed, was strong, and the interest in the materials of history - as well as its spirit - keen [365]; so one looks, in considering the historical narratives produced by women in the period, to identify and scrutinise the heroes and heroines that they chose and the contexts within which their heroism was played out.

Henrietta Ward was the only female artist of the period who produced a solid body of historical narratives, but there was a handful of women who were evidently equal to history painting, and worked on it sporadically. Some of the parameters of women's historical work can be established by examining some of these artists' pictures in some detail.

Osborn and Boyce/Wells were both exhibitors at the Academy in 1861, a year which was recognised as a good one for female artists, in the exhibition of several outstanding works. [366] Osborn showed "The Escape of Lord Nithsdale from the tower, 1716" (fig. 12), Boyce showed "La Veneziana" (fig. 14) and "Peep-bo!" (fig. 279). The first is a narrative scene with two principal figures and five surrounding ones, clothed in historical costume and depicted in a naturalistically rendered and historically datable setting, with an accompanying quotation in the catalogue to verbally expound the plot:

> "I had taken care that Mrs. Mills did not go out crying and afflicted, and the more so because he had the same dress as she wore... I went out leading him by the hand, and he held his handkerchief to his eyes... The guards opened the door, and I went downstairs with him, still conjuring him to make all possible despatch." [367]

The second picture - "La Veneziana" is the one of Boyce's exhibits to the point here - is a head and shoulders portrayal (of a friend of the artist, Charlotte Ridley, later Debenham) dressed in Renaissance style of Venetian character, against a brocaded wall, the whole painted in what then passed for Venetian, or Titianesque, colouring. [368] The former work measured 52" x 40½" and the latter 24¼" x 20". Osborn's is the more usual form of the history picture, but Boyce's work commands the same standing by its painterly accomplishment and earnestly period character, betraying a deliberate sense of a certain historical time and mode. Both these works show, as have so many considered here, that the main characters in women's pictures tend to be female: even though Osborn's painting is called "The Escape of Lord Nithsdale", the caption uses the wife's voice, and she is very obviously the heroine of the incident, inventing her husband's method of escape and engineering it, while the luckless lord follows her lead. The imperiousness of Boyce's character matches the dominance of Osborn's heroine. In both works, this quality - of strongmindedness, in the terms of the day - was commented upon by critics; the Times review of Osborn's picture noted that "Lord Nithsdale looks more scared than his wife - a distribution of expression a male painter would have avoided and a male critic may object to...", while the Athenaeum's critic wrote of "La Veneziana" as "a profile of a lady with small reptile-like eyes and tawny-coloured hair, rank and harsh; a cruel, square jaw and heavy, pitiless face." [369] The distribution of qualities of character in favour of the women led this latter critic to excess with regard to "Lord Nithsdale", when he contrasted the picture with that of Boyce, calling it "Commonplace, man-aping" and vulgar, saying that:

> "The poor peer looks an ugly mean-spirited fellow, which is a needless cruelty considering his undignified position. His heroic wife might have been better if she had not the air of a stage-heroine, which would have effectually betrayed her, if she had really assumed it, even to the doll-gaolers in the background." [370]

To the relief, no doubt, of such unsporting critics, Osborn did not

again attempt costume history; Boyce, however, had already shown a piece constructed similarly to "La Veneziana" in 1855, "Elgiva" (fig.396): a head that referred to an historical character from English history of the 900's; while she had had rejected from the Academy in 1856 "Rowena carrying the cup of Voltigern" (fig.397), (again a female figure but with more compositional interest than either of the others); and had shown the previous year (1860) a painting called "The Child's Crusade, 12th Century" (fig. 66), which moved the Saturday Review critic to remark:

> "It is strange that som any painters should persist in the vain attempt to illustrate the creations of Shakespeare and other great poets, when history affords them themes so excellently suited to their purpose as this which Mrs. Wells has chosen." 371

The primacy of history, even over the grand literary, is here clearly expressed.

If Boyce's work shows a strong feeling for the individual in history (she also began a "Sybil" (fig.398) which depicted a single female figure, and the "Child's Crusade" shows one family, rather than gathered masses of characters), then the historical works of Fanny McIan sound markedly sympathetic to history's rank and file. Although likened by some critics disadvantageously to her husband Robert's paintings, Fanny McIan's works are taken from the actual history of the Highland proletariat, and empathise with the lot of the anonymous crowd: "After the Battle of Prestonpans" (1862), "A Highlander defending his Family at Glencoe" (1849), "Soldiers' Wives awaiting the result of a Battle" (1849), "Highland Refugees from the '45 on the Coast of France, looking towards Scotland" (1845).[372] The whereabouts of only one of these paintings is known now, but contemporary descriptions of them indicate that the artist managed the grandeur which was thought necessary to the painting of history:

> "This is an admirable subject; it is original in conception, and is carried out with skill and knowledge, whence even greater things may

> be expected... In colour, drawing, and execution, the picture is 'masterly' (Soldiers' Wives...)
>
> "Less lofty in intention, but equally powerful in its manifestation, is Mrs. McIan's little picture of "Soldiers' Wives waiting the Result of a Battle".. The intense anxiety expressed in the various heads takes nothing from their several characters of beauty, and passion has in no one of them been allowed to degenerate into caricature or grimace"
>
> "Mrs. McIan's "Highland Refugees"... has the right feeling in it." 373

Her most acclaimed historical work, however, was more a modern history picture, treating the topical and touchy subject of Highland clearance and forcible eviction; it was praised in the same terms, but more strongly:

> "an important production...we have never seen one so perfectly free from licence.. it places this lady among the most powerful sentimental painters of the time."
>
> "There is no questioning the agonizing reality of the scene; and, patent as are the facts which gave rise to it, the talent of Mrs. McIan has proved equal to the task of transferring it to canvas... The execution of this picture is no less able than the conception of it is fine."
>
> "Mrs. McIan's pathetic and thoroughly serious picture." 374

More anecdotal in their terms were the historical pictures of Rebecca Solomon, which tended therefore to have less of a hero or heroine than simply a protagonist. She showed a painting in the 1860 Academy exhibition, along with those by Osborn and Boyce already discussed, which persuaded critics to begin to take her as a more serious painter than theretofore she had been considered. Though debatably as much a literary work as an historical, "Peg Woffington's visit to Triplet" (fig. 65) was welcomed by the Art-

Journal critic in terms which make it quite clear that the 'higher' genres were the ones which held the key to a female artist gaining any enduring success:

> "This is really a picture of great power, and in execution so firm and masculine that it would scarcely be pronounced the work of a lady... It is gratifying, encouraging, and full of hope, to find a picture so admirably painted by a lady; it is, moreover, the offspring of thought and intelligence, as well as study and labour... She adds another name to the many who receive honour as great women of the age." 375

The following year the artist produced "The Arrest of a Deserter", in 1862 "Fugitive Royalists" (fig. 21) ("The Claim for Shelter), and a "Princess Elizabeth the Tower" (undated). Solomon's history was taken from books (as was often the case at the time, whether the artist be male or female), and has a stagey and theatrical character which is exaggerated by the box-like space which she seems to favour, whereby the spectator is put in the position of a front-row member of a stalls audience. Solomon, though sometimes quoted among the handful of names which critics used to denote the best women artists of the time, was not described as a history painter (as Ward, for instance, was) and the reason for that is hinted at interestingly in the recurrent criticism of her work as vulgar. History painting required a spirit as well as a letter, and Solomon perhaps lacked the former though she strived laboriously to achieve the latter. 376 The much-praised "Peg Woffington", for instance, was reviewed thus in the Athenaeum: "by a lady who belongs to a clever family, whose previous works did not lead us to expect anything so little vulgar as the above subject. Miss Solomon has indeed improved..." 377 While the same critic appraised her "Arrest of a Deserter" in the following manner:

> "This is the best picture we have seen from this lady... there is more vigour of drawing and design in it than we had any reason to expect from her. We can only say that as a whole it would have been much better if it had been less vulgar in execution." 378

It can be surmised that one of the principal reasons why more female artists were not admitted by critics into the ranks of history painters was that they lacked the necessary spirit, even if they were not all as open to the accusation of vulgarity as was Solomon; Boyce was recognised as having it, Ward also came up to the mark: is it not this which was often meant when someone was complimented, in the period, as 'a true artist'? A hint of this is given in an article in the Spectator which perceptively discussed women's achievements in all the arts, in 1865:

> "... the reason, we believe, why women so seldom reach even to notability is not so much deficiency in strength and weight of purpose or character as deficiency in that love of universality, that eye for broad and typical effects, which a grasp of principle, and study of the theoretic roots of art, is absolutely requisite to give." 379

Thus, in engraving the "Fugitive Royalists" in 1869, the Art Journal waxed lyrical in the accompanying commentary, as to women's achievements in art at that time, but would not name any female artists in the highest types of works:

> "Painting and sculpture are at the present time both well represented by the "gentle" sex, and if in the former art we have not a Madlle. Rosa Bonheur to take the lead of our school in cattle-painting, we have those who in genre, landscape, and flower-painting, both in oils and watercolours, are entitled to distinctions which at some time or other - perhaps not far distant - the Academy may not consider it beneath its dignity to recognise..." 380

This picture of Solomon's brings up another question important to history narratives, which is the importance of telling the story: obviously, an essentially important factor in a narrative work. The scene had been variously interpreted at the time of its exhibition, the Times review describing it thus: "a father concealed in a hiding hole, behind a sliding panel, is about to be let out to

look at one of his children while asleep - a girl, too young, we suppose, to be trusted with the secret of her father's hiding-place", while the Saturday Review critic favoured the following interpretation:

> "A cavalier lady is intently watching a sick sleeping child in Puritan costume, whilst her boy, a lad in bright blue silk dress, very effectively coloured, clings to his mother in momentary alarm at hearing unfriendly footsteps. A puritan lady, to whose apartment they seem to have wandered in solicitude for her child, warns them to a speedy deaprture,through the sliding panel, a full-length portrait moving behind its frame." 381

When the Art Journal engraved the picture, seven years later, it changed the title for purposes of clarification - ""The Claim for Shelter" was exhibited in 1862, when it bore the title of "Fugitive Royalists", one which we considered less expressive of the exact meaning of the subject than that we have given it." 382 - and offered a third explanation of the narrative:

> "A royalist lady, claiming protection for herself and youthful son, has entered the house of a Puritan, and is introducedinto a chamber where a young sick girl lies; she has fallen asleep, it would seem, with an open Bible on her lap. The line - "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin" - was appended to the title in the catalogue, and, it may be assumed, serves as a key to the reading of the subject; the lady, fearing for the life of her own child, is touched with sympathy for the invalid, though the child of one who may have aided in the ruin of her house and the flight of its inmates." 383

In the light of this specific instance, it can be mooted that women tended to choose the image rather than the scene, in this as in other narrative genres, not only because of their relative inexperience in figure portrayal, but because the intelligible depiction of a story, concerning characters caught up in a possibly unfamiliar set

of circumstances which in itself must be made understandable to the spectator, is, all in all, a difficult task, of which many male and female painters alike were proved incapable, on the walls of the Academy, year after year.

Yet history painting was attempted by women artists throughout the period to an ever-varying degree, and to very unequal levels of achievement. Women associated with the Preraphaelite circle, not surprisingly, attempted history painting of a sort. Lucy Madox Brown must be mentioned for her "Margaret Roper" (1875, fig.399): her "Cornelius Agrippa showing the Fair Geraldine in a magic mirror to the Earl of Surrey" (1872) is an even more Rossettian treatment of part of the past. Marie Spartali (later Stillman) consistently exhibited paintings and drawings of this ilk, taking historical characters from a wide chronological range: "Sir Tristram and La Belle Froude" (1873), "Antigone giving burial rights to her brother Polynices" (1871), "The Romance of the Rose" (1870) [384] and others infringe to a degree on the romantic fancy picture, but display the second-generation Preraphaelite taste for recreating affecting emotional images from history, given in the full flavour of their contexts.

Some artists' attempts fitted more into the conventions of the time: many,Mary, Queens of Scots and Ladies Jane Grey appeared in the London exhibitions in the 1850's and '60's.[385] But there were other historical works which presented fresh and unhackneyed figures from history: Howitt showed a "Boadicea" at the Crystal Palace in 1856; Louise Jopling painted "Queen Vashti" in 1872; Gillies produced "Viva Perpetua in Prison" in 1858; Alyce Thornycroft's "Edith in search of Harold" was at the BI, 1866; while sculptural figures included Rachel Levison's "Hypatia" (1857), Mrs. Cooper's "Andromeda" (1863), Mrs. McCarthy's "Pyrrhus the first" (1857) and Hosmer's "Beatrice Cenci" (1857, fig.116).[386] Some of these works stray into the Classical repertoire, which women did not take up to a degree that renders it a distinctive category of work, but whatever historical period is the source and whatever nation's past has provided the cast, of these works, the tendency is clear again for

women to choose their sisters' experiences and achievements to portray.

This sex discrimination is, significantly, not marked in the work of Henrietta Ward, whose subjects were unhackneyed without being obscure or recherché, yet cognisant of popular preference. She treated Lady Jane Grey, Mary Queen of Scots, Cromwell, and the Princes in the Tower, all subjects which Roy Strong identifies as popular favourites of the period.[387] Yet she also excursed into non-British history for "The Childhood of Joan of Arc" (1867, fig. 19), "Josephine and the King of Rome" (1870), "An Incident in the Life of Frederick the Great" (1859), "The Despair of Henrietta Maria" (1862) and "The Fortunes of little Fritz" (1871). Additionally, she broached relatively untried areas in "Palissy the Potter" (1866, fig. 75), "Howard's farewell to England" (1858) and "The Queen's Lodge, Windsor in 1786" (1872, fig. 400).[388] Though her protagonist was more often female than male, there could equally well be a hero or heroine to the drama, giving their name to the work. The female characters do, however, tend to dominate visually, whether they are the prime interest or not: In "Chatterton" (1873, fig. 295), for instance, the young poet is subject to and smaller than Mrs. Edkins, his foster-mother, whose female presence is augmented by the older woman entering from the right; in "Lady Jane Grey refusing the Crown of England" (1868, fig. 15), the central group consists of two women and one man; in "Queen Mary quitting Stirling Castle" (1863, fig. 18), the scene contains only one male figure, that of the Earl of Mar at the left; in "Palissy the Potter" (1866), the wife is given a prominent position, catching the light, and half obscuring her husband's figure. A predominance of female characters (and experiences) in the work of women artists seemed, of course, only appropriate at the time: the facility of this idea, however, or the lack of logic shown in its application, is shown in this commentary from Nature and Art in its preview of the 1867 Academy show, "Antioipations of the RA":

> "Mr. E.M. Ward has a picture of Juliet and the Friar; this with his Amy Robsart of

> last year would indicate that he has made a change in his class of subjects. It is right that a lady should select heroines for her pictures, and Mrs. Ward has selected this year Joan of Arc..." 389

No indication that men should paint men! Though the feminine content of Henrietta Ward's works was frequently brought out by critics -

> "This is thoroughly a woman's subject, which a woman's heart and hand may best understand and paint" ("Mary Queen of Scots quitting Stirling Castle")
>
> "... interesting, and is painted with a love for children" ("Frederick the Great")
>
> "... We trust Henrietta Ward will not abandon the painting of children. Who else will make the beauty of our little ones immortal?" ("Henrietta Maria")
>
> "Subjects of this kind are at best uninteresting, and least of all fitted for a lady's pencil... Surely it is better for a lady to paint the simple beauty of children, than to invest a beautiful Queen, when struck down by woe, with so extravagant an expression." ("Henrietta Maria") 390

- she was credited with avoiding the pitfalls of feminity:

> "Mary Queen of Scots is a character on which writers and painters have indulged in a sentimentality that has not unfrequently grown sickly. Mrs. Ward - to her praise be it spoken - has escaped this snare. The picture possesses a power which preserves it from the approach (sic) of weakness." 391

and was, by and large, not condescended to (though she may have been occasionally flattered) as so many women were; as her career continued, references to her gender became fewer and fewer: the implication being that she graduated from the status of female artist to earn the position, simply, of an artist. Her works, however, do have a cast to them which bespeaks the domestic

experience of a wife and mother: she depicted childhood scenes in her treatments of Joan of Arc, Frederick the Great, the princes Edward and Richard, the Old Pretender, and Chatterton [392]; while mothers and children feature in "Mary quitting Stirling Castle", "Lady Jane Grey", "Josephine and the King of Rome" and "The Defence of Lathom House" (1874) [393]; and her scenes are almost exclusively set in interiors. Indeed, in describing "Scene from the Camp at Chobham" (1854), James Dafforne writing in the Art Journal alit, perhaps unconsciously, on the artist's tendency to feminise her subject-matter: "The subject assumes more of a domestic than a military character, for though two of the men of the regiment are introduced, they are in undress, while the wife of one of them is engaged at the wash-tub." [394] Only one work by the artist is known with an exclusively male cast of characters, and that is "Discussing Tactics" (1868), which features a group of soldiers seated around a table set in an interior. [395]

Ward was not the most elevated of history painters, as is evident from the foregoing; the emotional situations in her paintings tended to be such that the spectator could recognise the state of mind of the characters and the dilemmas in which they found themselves, from his or her own experience: they were familiar and familial situations which were accessible despite their historical dress and the distant date to which they referred. Still, they were intended to historically inform and to morally uplift - as the history piece was supposed to do in the period - and the artist was accorded the sort of recognition which indicates that she was taken for a serious painter:

> "We know of no lady - in our own school certainly - attaining so high a position as a painter of history as Mrs. Ward has shown herself... The selection of the subjects evidences a determination to identify her pencil with great and worthy themes." [396]

Thus the Art Journal in 1864. She achieved this standing as much through consistency as anything else: other women occasionally

produced history pictures, but with this genre, even more than with others, it was necessary to show oneself regularly and persistently as a painter or sculptor of such-and-such an ambition, if one was to win the attention and achieve the status that corresponded to one's efforts. The 'one-hit wonder' was a phenomenon that produced temporary fame and transitory success, unless the work in question should be bought and shown under circumstances that kept it in the public eye and mind.

Benham Hay's "Florentine Procession", shown in 1867, was an outstanding success at the time, but did not serve to carve out for the artist an enduring reputation. She had exhibited at London galleries before (see above) and had received generous though qualified praise from the critics. "The Florentine Procession" however stood on its own; it was shown at the French Gallery, in reviewing the exhibition at which the Chromolithograph's critic began:

> "The Fifteenth Annual Winter Exhibition of Cabinet Pictures, by British and Foreign Artists, not only contains many works of very high merit, some by well-known artists, others by those who have yet to make a name, but counts among its number what may justly be called one of the most remarkable pictures of modern times..." 397

The Athenaeum followed suit: "This is a much more interesting gathering than its immediate predecessor. The most interesting, if not the most valuable, picture it contains, is by Mrs. J.E. Benham Hay..." 398

The fact that the picture was a classical history painting by a woman, and that it was the result of study abroad, might easily have distorted its artistic value in contemporary eyes and rendered it remarkable through singularity rather than greatness: the Sunday Times referred to the picture as "The most ambitious and at the same time most successful work which, so far as our knowledge extends, ever came from the hand of an Englishwoman " 399; while the Illustrated London News critic pointed out that:

> "by departing from precedent, and admitting a large picture 'on the line' (virtually, indeed, it is separately shown), the collection acquired a work of peculiar interest - one (more especially as the production of a female artist) certain to 'draw' the art-world." 400

This indicates, incidentally, how significant a factor in the reception of a work was exhibition and its vagaries: the "Florentine Procession" was hung apart from other works, was number one in the exhibition, and was given three and a half pages of description in the catalogue, to a length of some 750 words. The appeal of the subject lay in a combination of the Preraphaelite exposure of early Italian painting, the rising neo-Classicism of which Frederick Leighton was the prime example (it would be interesting to compare Benham Hay's vanished work with that artist's processional picture of 1856 [401]), and the still increasing interest in the growing achievements of female artists. It was, according to the norms of 'female art', an enormous work (measuring approximately fifteen feet by seven feet six inches) and a very complex one, featuring approximately twenty figures. The main flaws pointed out by critics were its dense symbolism, certain defects of drawing, and affectation in its Italianate manner. [402] The artist seems not to have gone on to make of herself a grand history painter: Henry Vizetelly says that she later settled in Paris, while her subsequent appearances in London galleries seem to have been restricted to Italianate sketches and studies in the French gallery and at the Society of Female Artists. [403]

In the Spectator's review of the second SFA exhibition, the concluding remarks were:

> "... the lady-artists are generally modest in the range of their efforts. This, we have no doubt, is as it should be for the present. Modest achievement, or even study, is better beyond all kind of comparison than presumptuous non-fulfillment: but we hope that, as the exhibition gains maturity, it will be no presumption for ladies to grapple with important subjects of passion or pathos." 404

It seems to be that a considerable number did grapple with, but not many conquer, the challenge of 'great art'; but, in recording the achievements of Boyce, Ward and Benham, and reflecting upon the reputations those artists enjoyed in their own time, it seems incontrovertible that, however,poor overall was woman's achievement within the genre of history painting, it was better than posterity has led us to believe.

Modern history

In reviewing the Royal Academy exhibition of 1858, the Spectator's critic talked of the category of the historical narrative picture, what Ford Madox Brown termed 'modern history': "The new spirit which animates our art - that of seeking strong interest and pathos in the rich but latent resources of the life of the present age, is forcibly shown in this exhibition." [405] It has been made quite obvious in the foregoing discussion of the work of female artists, that they chose subject-matter primarily from their own world, or, precisely, from the world of women; with regard to the depiction of modern life, their experience produced works which would have rather been categorised as domestic genre than as modern history, and which here have been categorised, too, as images of the woman worker. However, mention can be found in contemporary source material, of works which sound excellent candidates for the genre of modern history, as understood by the Preraphaelite circle and as practised by other artists too. In most cases, however, the works are not now known.

They include the subject pictures of Blunden, whose treatment of the needlewoman theme, "For one short hour...", has been discussed already: she made paintings called "The Mother's Tale (1855), "Hope in Death" (1857), "The Bride" (1859) and "The Lacemaker" (1865) as well as one of which critical notice can provide some idea, "The Emigrant" (1855), described thus in the Art Journal -

> "A study of a girl absorbed in grief, resting on the bulwark of a ship. The figure is well drawn and painted; but her back is

> turned to the spectator, and the colour of her dress and that of the ship are identical - - a very mischievous error"

and thus in the Spectator -

> "She has seated herself at the vessel's side, and buries her face in her hands, in tender womanly home-sorrow. The calm blue plain of the sea sways and murmurs on to the horizon, lit by the momently varying hues of sunset, each more lovely than the last. This is a very touching work, and surprisingly simple; perhaps no one but a woman could have made its appeal to the sympathy quite so unerring and quiet." 406

Particular works of other artists who are discussed herein at length, which beg inclusion in the genre of modern history, are Howitt's "The Castaway", shown at the Academy of 1855, described by Dante Rossetti in a letter to William Allingham as "a rather strong-minded subject, involving a dejected female, mud with lilies lying in it, a dust-heap, and other details; and symbolical of something improper..." [407]; Boyce's lost "No joy the blowing season brings..." rejected at the Winter Exhibition of 1859, originally called "The Outcast" and evidently from the study which remains, a theme of a single mother turned from home [408]; McIan's "Highland Emigrants", which was exhibited at the National Institution in 1852, the year in which its subject was set; Florence Claxton's drawings "The adventures of a woman in search of her rights" (1871), a published collection of drawings.[409]

Other works which demand consideration by their titles, include: "The Clubhouse and the Workhouse" (1850) by Mrs. Hurlstone, "Leaving Home" (1857) by Louisa Corbaux, "The Wife" (1858) by Margaret Tekusch, "The Housewife" (1858) by Ellen Andrade, "The Outcast" (1861) by Mrs. Dundas Murray, "Domestic Cares" (1862) by Edith Dunn (Hume), "Vagrants at Rest" (1862) by Margaret Witcomb, "Homes of the Houseless" (1865) by Eleanor Mason, "Out of Work" (1871) by Margaret Backhouse, "The Casual Ward" (1872) by Louise t.[410]

Work of which some trace remains, which fits into the category of modern history, includes the paintings by Jerichau "A Wounded Danish Soldier" (1870, fig.351) and "Shipwrecked" (1871, fig.401); the drawings of MEE on the Franco-Prussian war for the Graphic: "A Friend in Need" (1870, fig.402), "Flight of French Peasants from Bazeilles" (1870, fig.403), "St. Denis - arrival of the wives' train from Paris" (1871, fig.404) and "The Communist Prisoners in the Orangerie, Versailles" (1871, fig.405); and, on a less sombre theme, Jane Bowkett's Frith-like "Promenade at Brighton" (undated, fig.406) and "Folkestone".[411]

Epics

In a discussion of the work of male artists, the epic genre should (in contemporary terms, at least) form the climax: the epic or heroic work was not, to any conspicuous degree, a product of the mid-Victorian female artist.[412] A work such as Benham's "Florentine Procession" or Thompson's "Roll Call" (fig.35) might qualify, though each of those two would fit comfortably into other genres (the former into the Neoclassical, the latter into the war picture, or even into the modern history picture.) In sculpture, the epic work is perhaps more readily attempted, though not necessarily more easily attained, so more examples can be mooted: the collaborations of Mary Thornycroft with her husband Thomas ("King Alfred receiving from his mother the book of Saxon poetry" (1851, fig.110), "Queen Boadicea" (1850's/1880's, fig.108)), Hosmer's "Zenobia" (1859) and "Pompeian Sentinel" (1877), some works of Margaret Foley and Durant, Amelia Paton Hill's "David Livingstone" (erected 1876, fig.112).

To some extent, however, the scale required of an epic work put such things beyond women's reach, in painting and sculpture alike: the pieces by Durant and Foley, for instance, whose themes might be considered epic ("Belisarius" 1851, or Foley's "Excelsior" 1860's) were not big enough, quite simply, to be perceived as heroic works in the understood sense. It has been seen how smallness was one of the stereotypical qualities expected of women's art, and largeness a cause for comment: this latter comes into play when a work which

is near to the female version of the epic picture is considered. This is the Countess of Westmorland's "The British Mother", exhibited at the British Institution in 1857; the Art Journal described it thus:

> "This is a large portrait of Lady Mornington, the mother of the late Duke of Wellington. It is the largest oil picture we have ever seen by a lady; and the principal portrait, together with the busts of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Wellesley, are so well-painted as to be at once recognised. It is well-known from the engraving, and has ever been exteemed a valuable acquisition to the world." 413

This work has the scale, and it has the universality, necessary to the epic work; yet it remains a portrait, and is thus robbed of heroic status. In another way, some women's works had the largeness of concept, and the classically validated forms, required of an epic work, but they lacked the scale and the authoritative medium:e.g. Gillies' drawing "Trust" (fig. 407), [414] or Waterford's drawings "The Stairs of Life" (fig. 408),and "The Fates" (fig. 409), or EVB's "Facilis Descensus" and "Death and the Lady" [415] (which latter are good candidates for the religious picture category, but have a certain grandeur, despite their small scale, which bids fair to promote them to the epic category.)

A study of women's work in the period shows, in fact, how contrived are some of the distinctions that are commonly made as to genre with regard to Victorian works of art, in the face of the material reality of what artists painted and sculpted. The epic or heroic is more properly a quality than a genre, inhering in works of different genres: religious or historical or war works could have epic or heroic quality, distinguishing them in some way that is hard to articulate from their fellows in the same genre. The epic or heroic quality in women's work necessarily tended, in the period, to adhere to a set of experiences not universally recognised as having to do with greatness, because stemming from female experience in a world and at a time when male experience - war, death,for patriotic reasons,

leadership whether of millions or of a family, risk-taking for the greater good - was seen as the source of greatness which transcended the immediate and personal and ascended into the realms of the heroic. The self-sacrifice, danger, or tragedy of a wife and mother's existence could thus be the stuff of fancy pictures, domestic genre scenes or modern histories, but not of epic or heroic works.

Other genres missing from this account are marine painting and the nude: it is, more simply, in these cases, again the fact that women artists of the period did not, by and large, practise these genres. (Isolated pieces depicting seascapes or featuring a naked figure may well have been executed by individual artists, but such a circumstance does not constitute the existence of a genre.) [416] Thornycroft's royal babies and children were on occasion nude or partially so, but they remain portrait soulptures. It is not till the 1880's, in the works of Henrietta Rae, Evelyn de Morgan (as she became), and others, that the nude appears in women's painting to any appreciable degree.

It has been shown that more of the art produced by mid-Victorian women artists lay within the low-ranking genres than within those ranking high in the hierarchy. It is hoped that the network of reasons why this was the case has, also, been indicated if not explained. A useful question to pose at this stage, is whether the genres which were considered second-rate were practised by women because the second-rate was deemed suitable for them, or whether those genres were considered second-rate because women largely practised them; the paucity of actual works left as evidence, and the uncertainties, ambivalence, reassessment and hypocrisy which the period of the 'woman question', in its confusion on the topic, displays, makes it a practically impossible question to answer satisfactorily,however. As a partial summing-up, and as a temporary conclusion until such time as more work is discovered to testify for itself either in support or contradiction of the generalisations ventured here, Hamerton again seems to put the case very efficiently as to why women's work (in painting, at least) in the period took the pictorial type and style it did:

"To do any good whatever in either of the two principal divisions of this art of painting, a young lady would have to place herself in direct antagonism, not only to society, but to her own conscience, and that parental authority which enforces the laws of society, of which it is in every house the lieutenant and the representative, the arm and the instrument." 417

Analysis of types of work in SFA shows 1857/70 in approximate genre categorisations

	f&f*	animals	portraits	copies	l'scape	sculpt.	total pics.	total artists
1857	55	9	50	37	108	14	358	149
1858	85	19	38	79	162	21	582	277
1859	38	11	15	34	102	4	311	145
1860	40	5	9	64	132	2	319	150
1861	54	16	23	1	160	6	333	165
1862	35	10	25	3	136	5	283	133
1863	39	12	13	0	100	11	269	111
1864	49	14	13	1	105	0	253	100
1865	54	7	12	12	95	8?	276	113
1866	65	13	22	5	205	5	403	158
1867	50	9	16	14	167	6	400	168
1868	58	17	12	14	200	1	413	165
1869	57	8	28	17	213	1	484	183
1870	54	13	20	16	232	0	473	208

* f&f = fruit and flowers

Notes

1. Respectively, Athenaeum, April 3 1858, p.439; ibid, February 19 1859, p.257; Spectator, February 8 1862, p.157; Woman's Opinion, April 18 1874, p.68.

2. SFA review 1874, Woman's Opinion, April 18 1874, p.68.

3. Englishwoman's Review, no.3, April 18 1857, p.1.

4. John Ruskin to Anna Blunden, February 1857, quoted in Surtees, op. cit., p.90 (letter B11); Ruskin's ideas about women artists and their approach to painting and drawing were, characteristically, inconsistent and contradictory - in this, as noted above, he was typical of the period.

5. Art Journal, June 1 1855, p.175.

6. ibid, May 1 1858, p.153; Mrs Arthur Shirley specialised in painting horses, though her other exhibit at the SFA that year (where the work referred to here was shown) was "Wounded Stag": the previous year, she had shown "A Troop Horse of the 11th Hussars", "Favourite brown Mare" and "Chestnut Horse, property of Major Maxe", while her only recorded appearance at the BI was with "A Study of Horses" (1859).

7. Athenaeum, February 19 1870, p.265; for the context of this comment, and more discussion of it, see below, n.61.

8. Art Journal, June 1 1863, p.106; similar comments, extracting the feminine elements in a work which attempts to belong to a high-ranking genre, can be seen in the Illustrated London News critic's reaction to McIan's "Highland Emigrants" (1857): "Mrs. McIan, as a woman, has seized the pathetic side of a great social question" (June 6 1857, p.545), in contrast to the Spectator's reaction, in the same exhibition (SFA 1857), to Sophia Sinnett's "Reading the List of the Killed and Wounded", where no point is made of the artist's gender: "a family group, well discriminated in these respects. The wife's eyes remain fixed in terrible suspense, as she clasps her hands hard round the baby on her knee; one little girl stares at her with an undefined sense of something wrong; another, of more advanced years, follows, with flushing face and pointing finger, the eyes of the old father who glances down the list; the mother looks upward in an appeal to heaven, which would fain think itself resignation" (June 6 1857, p.594).

9. Art Journal, June 1 1855, p.188 and ibid, June 1 1857, p.179; these remarks can only be valid if taken relatively, for the painting and drawing of game, dead or alive, was not so rare among women: the Stannard women, Eloise and Emily, painted game as much as they did other still-life themes, while many of the artists who showed still-life at the SFA exhibitions, would exhibit fruit, flowers, birds and game seemingly interchangeably, though admittedly this was the case among less good or less serious artists. Perhaps the implication in these comments is that it was rare for women to take up this subject successfully.

10. Illustrated London News, June 6 1857, p.545; see above, n.8; it is tantalising that none of this artist's works is presently

located, for her subjects were inclined towards the heroic or epic, yet she consistently received criticism praising her femininity - "Mrs. McIan's pictures are always more or less pleasing, because always thoroughly feminine..." (Critic, June 15 1850, p.309); "("Captivity and Liberty") is an example of that frequent charm of result which arises out of cultivated delicacy of taste and the rejection of all that is repulsive and unpleasing - though lacking energy of style and intensity of expression" (Athenaeum, April 27 1850, p.454) - so it would be useful to see exactly what the visual character of her painting was.

11. Athenaeum, February 9 1861, p.200; lurking here is the tacit relegation of certain art to a lower rank and the corresponding elevation of other art to a higher, a consequence of the hierarchy of genres which hampered the artist's endeavours in a way referred to by F.G. Stephens in his review of the RA of 1861 in Macmillan's Magazine: "It is the custom, in art-criticism, to divide the subject in hand according to the subjects of the pictures considered, without reference to any peculiarly distinguishing quality that may be found in any class; so that all the inventive or poetic faculty in the world, if it be displayed upon a landscape or marine subject, will not obtain for its exhibitor a prior place or even higher credit than is due to him (sic) as a landscape or marine painter, per se, after all the figure, historical or dramatic pictures have been disposed of" (vol.4, July 1861, p.207). This, of course, affected women particularly adversely, and will be considered below with particular regard to still-life.

12. Athenaeum, May 11 1861, p.635; the precise nature of 'vulgarity' in a painting is mysterious to define, but certain it is that it was a bad thing for women's work to be; Rebecca Solomon suffered consistently from this accusation (see below). This work was sold at Christie's, May 25 1979 (lot 25).

13. Art Journal, June 1 1855, p.175; it was the moribund state of the bird and the crude cause of death, which, presumably, disturbed the reviewer; had the bird been frozen to death, bearing no traces of blood, for instance, the tastefulness of the subject would surely have been considered greater. This was, in fact, an unusual theme for the artist, who inclined to paint fruit and flowers.

14. Athenaeum, February 19 1859, p.257; see below for further discussion of the work of Elizabeth Murray.

15. Art Journal, May 1 1863, p.97; this comment was part of a half-column appreciation of the painting, which was very favourable indeed, declaring that the picture "may fairly claim recognition amongst the best efforts of modern Art." Its whereabouts are unknown. That women, themselves, took on the evaluation of what was masculine being inherently and necessarily better, is shown in such behaviour as Pauline Trevelyan's when, some of her water-colours being exhibited in 1850 on the advice of Ruskin, her mentor, a male friend told her "that people at the exhibition thought the name P.J. Trevelyan on the pictures must indicate a

man", and she wrote in her diary: "methinks (this) pleases me more than any praise I have had of them" (Raleigh Trevelyan, A Preraphaelite Circle, London, 1978, p.54).

16. ibid, May 1 1858, p.143; the motif was described thus by the same writer: "This is a half-length figure, representing a wandering daughter,'of an errant tribe', who bears about her entire personnelle, and who,,like the Medea of the AuKetov (but not of Euripides), - 'Has no whereabouts - Her home is number nowhere'. She bears a child at her back, a ballad in her left hand, and in her right a basket of apples, and is embowered in an overhanging bush of flowering lilac..." (whereabouts unknown).

17. Copies decreased in number because, firstly, they were disallowed and, secondly, they became such an issue with critics (see immediately above). Even so, in the 1869 show, there were still seventeen copies listed as such in the catalogue. The number of sculptural works exhibited was hardly ever above ten throughout the '50's and '60's. Whether this reflected any policy on the organisers' part is not evident.

18. Illustrated London News, February 4 1860, p.107.

19. Athenaeum, June 27 1857, p.825.

20. ibid, April 3 1858, p.439.

21. ibid, February 11 1860, p.211; this year's review concluded: "That women should confine themselves to being mere copyists, mere triflers over posies, or painful finishers of miniatures, in no respect permits woman to hold her place in Art equal to what hers is in authorship, or musical exhibition (curious, by the way, is the absence of originality in female musical creation)..."

22. ibid, February 9 1861, p.200.

23. See Reynolds' sixth discourse; but also, see his second, where the contradictions of learning from others' efforts is unwillingly expressed. The copying of Nature was something which women were constantly being recommended to do more of: "Where we see ambition, there is also marked and ignominious failure, with its causes, - carelessness and idle neglect of nature" (Athenaeum, February 8 1862, p.197); "those ladies who wish to gain a shred of reputation must sit down patiently with their best instructress - Nature" (Art Journal, May 1 1858, p.143); "that care in detail and accurate observation of the facts of nature, which most ladies appear to hold in contempt" (ibid, March 1 1871, p.91).

24. See Surtees, op. cit., for Ruskin's injunctions to Waterford and Blunden in this line. He pressed Greenaway in the same direction (see Spielmann and Layrd, Kate Greenaway, London, 1905 and R.H. Viguers, A Kate Greenaway Treasury, London, 1968, p.68ff) and he kept many women disciples copying for his own convenience: Louise Blandy, Octavia Hill, Mrs. Higford Burr and others provided Ruskin with copies for his books and lectures. See P.G. Nunn, "Ruskin's Patronage of Women Artists", Women's Art Journal, Fall/Winter 1981, p.8.

25. Dictionary of National Biography, vol.14, p.365; the subject is Severn/Newton.

26. An interesting parallel is Corot's teaching of Berthe Morisot, the Impressionist landscapist: see Denis Rouart, The Correspondence of Berthe Morisot, New York, 1957. Bodichon's albums are in the possession of Hercules Brabazon's descendants, to whom I am grateful for access thereto.

27. Saturday Review, May 25 1861, p.531; Critic, May 11 1861, p.606; Saturday Review, May 21 1864, p.624. Instances of both sorts of comparison are legion, throughout the period: "... of certain prettinesses by Messrs. Rochard and Bouvier there is no need for us to offer minute description. The former in his imaginary ladies is beaten hollow by a lady - we mean Miss Jane Egerton (Athenaeum, April 23 1853, p.504); "Mrs. Holford, in her 'Sunday Afternoon in St. Peter's at Rome', seems to have had a peep into Cattermole's studio, and brought away, not clandestinely, we feel assured - an idea or two, of which she has made good use" (Art Journal, July 1 1857, p.216); "Mrs. J.W. Brown founds her style on that of Sidney Percy and the Williams family, not without success" (Spectator, June 6 1857, p.594); "By the same (E. Murray) is no.168, 'A Spanish Scribe, reading a Gipsy's Loveletter', - a subject, thanks to Mr. Phillip, we have before seen artistically treated" (Athenaeum, February 9 1861, p.200); "Mrs. Margaret Robbinson shows the teaching and the style of one of the finest draughtsmen of the day in her scene from 'The Vicar of Wakefield', "Olivia and Sophia in their Sunday Finery" (Illustrated London News, February 4 1860, p.107); "... of portrait studies the most remarkable is that of 'J.E. Pfeiffer, esq.', by Miss Starr, known as a gold medallist of the Academy. The handling is most masterly, the colour superb; indeed, at first glance we thought the head must be by G.F. Watts..." (Art Journal, June 1 1870, p.162). These are some of the subtly differing ways in which comparisons were couched. See also note 15 above.

28. "The most noticeable thing to the critical eye, is the general want of study betrayed by the works. There is no want of practice, but it is rare to see any picture which impresses one with the idea of having been carefully considered and earnestly studied from nature. There are many which are very clever handiwork, in the manner of certain painters of the day, with all the trick of colour and touch; but thought and originality are seldom felt to have had much concern in the production" (Spectator review of the SFA, 1861, February 16 1861, p.165).

29. Art Journal, March 1 1860, p.85.

30. Athenaeum, February 19 1859, p.258.

31. Saturday Review, January 24 1863, p.112.

32. Magazine of Art, 1882, p.xxxi; Jay copied Turner for Ruskin, and some examples of her work are still at Brantwood.

33. Cotman is quoted by Derek Clifford, Watercolours of the Norwich School, London, 1965, p.36; Clifford is the modern writer. Dictionary of National Biography, vol.2, p.1248.

34. Apart from his publications for the British Museum on Greek and Roman matters from 1856 onwards, Charles Newton's works included On the study of archaeology (1850), On the method of study of ancient art (1850), Travels and Discoveries in the Levant (1865) and Essays on art and archeology (1880). Her original oil paintings were seen by some critics to spring from ancient models: the Art Journal wrote of her "Sebaste" (RA 1864): "It has nothing of the rude naturalism now in vogue; on the contrary, it is painted tenderly and lovingly, after the later manner known to the Italian spiritualists" (Art Journal, June 1 1864, p.160).

35. See Basil Hunisett, Steel-engraved Book Illustration in England, London, 1980.

36. For the selection and accumulation of works in the National Gallery, see Robertson, op. cit., and for the contents of other collections known to, though variously accessible to, the public at the beginning of the period, see Waagen, op. cit., and Jameson, Companion to the most celebrated Private Galleries of Art, London, 1844; Steegman, op. cit., is also useful on this point.

37. There is no record of Brooker exhibiting anywhere else again; Fripp showed with the SFA in 1858, 1861, 1863, 1870, then with the SLA, 1876, 1885, 1886, also once at the RA, seven times at Suffolk Street, three times at the New Society of Watercolour Painters, at the Dudley, and at Birmingham: see Graves and Pavière (landscape). She was probably a daughter of the Fripp family of landscapists.

38. There is no other record of Mrs. Penny's work; Marian Harrison exhibited at the SFA the next year, too, but not, apparently, elsewhere - she was not related to the Liverpool Harrisons, Mary, Maria, etc.

39. "... we must remember that a large proportion of these lady exhibitors are but students", urged the Illustrated London News reviewer in his critique of the 1865 SFA (February 4 1865, p.110).

40. E,M. Allen is unknown apart from this single appearance at the Society; Backhouse appears elsewhere in this study as a frequent and prolific exhibitor: born Margaret Holden, she was a pupil of Mulready and studied at Sass's, and showed work at the SFA (1857/85), RA (1846/82), Crystal Palace, Suffolk Street, Dudley and Glasgow. She had a daughter, Mary, who followed her into the exhibition rooms in 1870 (see Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.21); Blackwell showed at the SFA in 1859, also, but was only temporarily resident in this country, being the sister of Elizabeth Blackwell, the pioneering American doctor, and returning to teach art in New York, after getting an art education in this country and in France (see Dorothy Clarke Wilson, Lone Woman, London, 1970); Bleaden showed at the Society again in 1864, 1871, 1872, 1873 and also at the British Institution (1854/60), RA (1853, 1854, 1873), Suffolk Street and the Dudley.

41. See above, n.23; the reproductive bias of women's activities in arts and crafts can be seen in the widespread popularity of stencils, tracing, copy- and pattern books in activities as divers in status as painting and sculpture themselves, dressmaking,

interior decoration, or handwriting. Repetition is inbuilt with such a process, and it is not incidental that the criticism which could be applied to the best female artists of the period, is their tendency to repeat themselves in their respective ways: Thornycroft was reproached for it, as was MEE (Edwards/Freer/Staples), Boyce evidently did in her models, Ward evidently did in her settings and situations, Solomon did in her decor, Mutrie in her materials. To a certain extent, of course, repetition is required of an artist in order that they should become distinct and recognisable: positive repetition is called 'establishing a style'.

42. Anon, "On the Education of the Artist", New Quarterly Review, 1861, p.348; the great examples expected to inspire great deeds were, to some extent, the same for women as for men: Raphael, as has been discussed, Rubens, Van Dyck - but among female artists' models one sees an influence of fashion, as well as of timeless valuations, as in the high incidence of Murillo works as models; the sale of Louis Philippe's Spanish collection obviously had something to do with this, and as an anonymous writer in that year observed in Blackwood's Magazine, "There has been a demand of late years for Spanish pictures, Murillos must be had at any price" ("The Fine Arts and the Public Taste", Blackwood's Magazine, vol. 74, no.353, July 1853, p.103). Such susceptibility to the sudden and the transitory was seen as a negative quality.

43. See above, ch.1, n.19; he recommended imitation for males as well as females as the right way of educating an artist, but frequently despaired of women being capable even of doing that properly: "If you were my pupil, and a boy instead of a girl, - or youth instead of a young lady, I should at once forbid all sentiment for a couple of years, and set you to paint, first - a plain white cambric pocket handkerchief - or linen napkin, thrown at random on the table, and kept there - till finished - taking about a week's hard work to said pocket-handkerchief. Then a coloured one, with a simple pattern. Then an apple. Then a child's cheek - perhaps two inches of it - if you were very good - I would give you a bit of lip - as much as would take half a smile. Then a curl or two of golden hair - putting you back to bricks the moment I saw you getting sentimental..." (Ruskin to Blunden, February 1857?, quoted in Surtees, op. cit., p.90, letter B11). For women artists' tendency to sentimentality, see further below, n.276.

44. Art Journal, March 1 1868, p.46; similarly, on further occasions: "The flower and fruit painters, as might be anticipated, among a company exclusively of ladies, are in themselves a host" (March 1, 1870, p.89); "Strange to say, none of the flowers or fruit strike one as particularly pleasing" (March 1 1872, p.89).

45. Katherine de Mattos, "Flowers and Flower-Painters", Magazine of Art, 1883, p.423.

46. "The Exhibition of the Society of Female Artists, numbering some 600 works in all,... is about half composed of water colours. This is quite natural. Watercolours with their cleanliness, easy manipulation and aptness for use in sketching, have always been

the favourite material of ladies" (Saturday Review, May 22 1858, p.534); it is interesting to note that the humble status of the genre was quite forcibly adverted to by the Art Journal critic in 1861, when discussing Rosa Brett's work, but he thought it was by a man: "It might be difficult to get more interesting thistles than those of no.280, painted by Rosarius, whoever he may be: but they are only thistles after all, and no means within the domain of Art will magnify the down into importance, even although every fibre were as fully represented as in nature. At best, such success would be a display of laborious idleness - an what can it be, when this kind of success is less than half achieved?" (Art Journal, July 1 1861, p.195). (See fig. 438).

47. Art Journal, June 1 1861, p.169.

48. Athenaeum, June 2 1855, p.648.

49. ibid, May 21 1859, p.683.

50. See list of her works in Harold Day, East Anglian Painters, Leigh on Sea, 1968/9, p.215ff.

51. Specific examples of this tendency include Mary Harrison's "Gardener's Shed" at the New Society of Painters in Watercolour in 1850; Charlotte James' "Fresh from the Market" at the Crystal Palace in 1862; Emma Walter's two "Fresh Gathered"'s at the SFA in 1857.

52. Exhibited, respectively: Suffolk Street, Royal Academy, SFA, Dudley. This process was applied to bird pictures, too: Fanny Vallance showed "The lustred kingfisher" at the SFA in 1870 and "The pink-foot dove did cling unto the beech-bough, murmuring now and then", both owing their titles to William Morris' writings; M.S. Blakeney showed at the same exhibition the year before, the Wordsworth-inspired "Behold within the leafy shade, Those bright blue eggs together laid."

53. Spectator, January 5 1878, p.17.

54. Art Journal, June 1 1859, p.171; ibid, June 1 1854, p.168.

55. Spectator, June 7 1879, p.727, reviewing the OWS exhibition; the artist's works shown here were "Cottage Gardens, Firhill, Shere"; "The house in the marsh"; "The harvest Moon"; "The young Artist"; "The Abinger Arms"; "The clothesline"; "Old Farm Buildings, Abinger Hammer, Surrey"; "Carrying Hay, Albury, Surrey".

56. Athenaeum, February 17 1855, p.208; Art Journal, March 1 1858, p.80.

57. ibid, June 1 1851, p.161.

58. Critic, January 1 1855, p.25; though they escaped the otherwise universal (for women) comparison with Hunt and Lance, the sisters were recommended to take heed of Fantin-Latour's flowerpieces, on occasion (Times, May 25 1864, p.6) and were compared to him (Spectator, June 24 1865, p.696 and Times, May 19 1869, p.5); they were considered by those same critics, however, inexpressibly better than their historical predecessor, Mary Moser (Times, May 18 1865, p.6).

59. Respectively: Spectator, May 1 1852, p.423; ibid, April 3 1852, p.328; Critic, June 6 1849, p.255; Critic, June 1 1848, p.262. The Childs were shown at Suffolk Street, Harrison's work at the RA, and Benham's at the RA.

60. Spectator, February 19 1870, p.237; the Spectator was not alone in approaching Coleman's work in this way: "Where have we seen exquisiteness and delicacy in fruit, flower and leaf painting so near akin to W. Hunt's as in the drawings of Miss Coleman in the Dudley Gallery?... But Miss Coleman is original as well as exquisite" (Times, April 24 1865, p.12); "Miss Coleman, who has had no superior in W. Hunt's walk since W. Hunt died, and who is not, an imitator of his..." (ibid, February 11 1871, p.4).

61. Athenaeum, February 19 1870, p.265; critics' ambivalent attitudes to female ambition are demonstrated similarly in the Art Journal's reviews of the SFA (Jenkins' work was at the Dudley) the year before, and the year beforethat: in 1869, the still life was reflected upon thus: "Ladies have always proved aptitude for the painting of flowers, and the pretty art is certainly more within their reach than those ambitious and arduous walks of the profession to which women clamorous for their rights now incline." In 1868, however, the same critic lamented the standard of still-life work and wrote: "It is evident that the innocent department of flower-painting will remain over-stocked until strong-mindedness impels women to desperate study from 'the life'." (Art Journal, March 1 1869, p.82 and March 1 1868, p.46).

62. Art Journal, April 1 1864, p.98.

63. ibid, February 1 1866, p.56; she showed at the SFA from its inception till 1886, also at Liverpool and at the Crystal Palace, after training at the Female School of Art; she was exclusively a flower painter.

64. ibid, March 1 1871, p.85; Eastlake was of the generation which benefitted from the opening of the Dudley, exhibiting there from 1868 onwards in the watercolour exhibitions.

65. ibid, December 1 1866, p.374 and Illustrated London News, September 12 1863, p.271; born Mary Rosenberg in 1819, the artist exhibited at the RA (1857/74), at the New Society of Painters in Watercolour (of which she was a member since 1851), Suffolk Street and the Free (National Institution), at other London exhibitions and at Liverpool. Her husband was a Bath artist, and the art gallery of that city has specimens of his and her work, as well as works by her sisters, also flower painters (see below). In 1856, her book "The Art of Flower Painting" was published.

66. Critic, February 1 1851, p.68 and Spectator, May 3 1851, p.428; born Rossiter in 1788, the artist pursued a long career (she died in 1875) which was established when the period under discussion here opened. She exhibited at the RA, BI, Suffolk Street, SFA and the New Society of Painters in Watercolour, of which she was a member from 1832. She appears in the Dictionary of National Biography, in Clayton (vol.1, p.411), in Pavière (fruit and flowers), in Roget's account of the Old Watercolour Society (vol.2, p.297), though Ellet does not mention her. Her daughter

Maria took up the same genre (see below, n.68).

67. Athenaeum, February 13 1869, p.247 reviewing the SFA.

68. She became a member of the OWS (see Roget, vol.2, p.300), but also exhibited at the RA, BI, Suffolk Street, the SFA and Glasgow and other provinces. Her work seems to have resembled her mother's, but then she was her mother's pupil (see Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.280). Harriet also painted in the genre; another painting daughter was Emily. Significantly, a son, George, became a landscape painter.

69. Tytler, op. cit., p.263; she exhibited at the RA (1859/61), at the SFA (1858/62), at Manchester and Liverpool within the same period; Ottley mentions her while discussing her father: "A daughter of Mr. Lance follows in her father's career, evincing considerable ability" (H. Ottley, A biographical and critical dictionary, London, 1866, p.108); see also Paviere (fruit and flowers).

70. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.272.

71. Spectator, July 26 1879, p.949.

72. Dictionary of National Biography, vol.14, p.614; this account is more than amplified by the recent publication by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where her paintings are kept, of the biography A Vision of Eden, Exeter, 1980.

73. ibid; this was, of course, highly unconventional: while in Australia, she noted "We were said to be the first ladies who ever travelled on that road alone by Cobbe and Co's coaches..." (A Vision of Eden, p.161).

74. See, for comparison, Eliza Toulmin Smith, "The Use of Plants and Flowers in Ornament", Art Journal, November 1 1871, p.258 and Kate Greenaway, Language of Flowers, London, 1884.

75. Athenaeum, May 8 1858, p.598: "Miss Mutrie is becoming quite the Rosa Bonheur of azaleas. We hope soon to hail her the queen of landscape."

76. See Ward Lock's "Elegant Arts for Ladies", London, 1856.

77. Published by Winsor and Newton; perversely, in its review of the book, the Athenaeum picked the azalea as an example: "The same Azalea selected by Miss Mutrie and by Mr. Bartholomew, if sketched by lady and gentleman with the self-same pencil, and coloured by both with the same pigments from the same palette, would, when put on paper, by no means 'come out' the same... Doubtless there is a certain amount of process which is communicable... but more than such hints no book can convey..." (Athenaeum, April 12 1856, p.463).

78. Hamerton, op. cit., p.354.

79. Art Journal, June 1 1864, p.167; the comment was meant to apply generally to the artist's work, but was seen to be especially pointed up in the work here addressed: "for example, in this very picture, where the capitals and entablature of a Greek temple are thrust with ostentation into the background."

80. Margaret Oliphant reported in 1893: "Rosa Bonheur, then at the height of her reputation, was there one evening, a round-faced, good-humoured woman, with hair cut short and divided at one side like a man's, and indeed not very distinct in the matter of sex so far as dress and appearance went" (Autobiography and letters, 1899, reprint, Univ. of Leicester, 1974, p.37. In a pre-Freudian age, it was never actually suggested that she might be a lesbian, but there is, in this preoccupation with her unconventional habits, the suggestion that she is not a proper woman, and therefore explicable as a great painter in that respect (given that the terms great painter and woman were mutually exclusive). See further, Ashton and Browne Hare, Rosa Bonheur, a life and a legend, London, 1981.

81. These pictures were exhibited, respectively, at the New Society of Painters in Watercolour; unknown (this painting was sold at Sotheby's May 20 1975, but does not appear in Gibbs' recorded exhibited work, at the BI and Suffolk Street); RA; SFA; French (Winter) Exhibition. Their whereabouts, with the exception of the Gibbs, are now unknown.

82. She exhibited at the British Institution 1855/6 and 1863, and at the RA 1855/72, and at Suffolk Street 1855/76; it will be seen from her appearances at the last gallery, and from her few showings at the SLA, that she painted cattle too, though infrequently.

83. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.305.

84. This work was, in fact, painted in 1853; whereabouts unknown.

85. Illustrated London News, June 6 1857, p.545.

86. Art Journal, June 1 1857, p.216.

87. Spectator, June 6 1857, p.594.

88. See Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.394; a fellow 'amateur', Louisa Lady Waterford, recommended that Clayton include the artist in her book: "I want to add one name to the painteresses of animals in Miss Clayton's list, that of Mrs. Blackburne (sic), née Jemima Wedderburn: such a wonderful genius for animals; Landseer himself said so. She published various books of illustrations, and one of sea-birds is large and beautiful. She knows more about the action and attitude of every kind of animal than any one I ever knew" (letter to EVB, November 19 1875, quoted in Augustus Hare, The Story of Two Noble Lives, London, 1893, vol. 3, p.363.

89. Letter of April 1849, quoted in Cook and Wedderburn, op. cit., vol.36, p.99.

90. Respectively, Spectator, April 3 1858, p.380 and Athenaeum, June 27 1857, p.825.

91. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.397.

92. Athenaeum, March 5 1864, p.342 and Art Journal, April 1 1864, p.98; the artist exhibited at the Society in 1864, 1865, and 1866. The whereabouts of this work are unknown.

93. Critic, July 1 1850, p.335 reviewing the National Institution; Illustrated London News, February 15 1862, p.177.

94. Illustrated London News, February 15 1862, p.177; the artist also exhibited farming subjects, doubtless featuring animals: "Loading a cart" (BI, 1867), "Going to Plough" (Winter, 1869/70), "Carting" (SFA, 1868).

95. Art Journal, March 1 1865, p.68; the artist showed at the RA, BI, SFA and Dudley (watercolours), always birds, fowl, dogs and the occasional female fancy head or figure, from 1864 onwards.

96. Barker exhibited dogs at the RA (1853/60), and the SFA (1857/8), but showed, to apparently equally good effect, flower pieces and portraits at these places and others (e.g. the Amateur Exhibition, 1852, the Winter Exhibition, 1852); for biographical information, see Christabel Maxwell, op. cit., (above, ch.4, n.124). See æabove, n.6, for Shirley.

97. Art Journal, April 1 1864, p.98.

98. Described by Walter Shaw Sparrow (op. cit.) in 1905 thus: "Miss Lucy Kemp-Welch has made, and deserved, a place for herself the last few years, and she stands alone among women as an animal painter of power" (p.70). Her animal was the horse; see David Messum, The life and work of Lucy Kemp-Welch, London, 1976.

99. These were Hannah B. Barlow, Emily Desvignes, Katharine King, Mary L. Kirschner, Gertrude Jekyll, Frances Fripp Rossiter; Blackburn appeared as an amateur.

100. Eighteen, as compared with six; they were Bodichon, Blunden, Mrs. J.W. Brown, Marian Chase, Marian Croft, Susan E. Gay, Mary Gow, Alice Manly, Mrs. Marrable, Clara Montalba, Emma (Mrs. William) Oliver, Mrs. Phillips, Louise, Margaret and Rose Rayner, Frances Redgrave, Harriet Seymour, Norah and Ellen Vernon, Sophy Warren and Linnie Watt. The predominance of landscape was not confined to female artists: Graves' analysis of painters' exhibition records in the period show it to be a generalised preference: in 1863, the Art Journal reported of the BI show: "The British Institution, destitute of historic works, fortunately finds some compensation, at least, in the multitude of its landscapes..." (Art Journal, March 1 1863, p.48), and such comments were also made about the Suffolk Street exhibitions.

101. Art Journal, March 1, 1865, p.68.

102. Hamerton, op. cit., p.355; the visual evidence of women drawing painting from nature tends to show the 'fair artists' in pastoral or sylvan landscapes: Bodichon's satirical sketches of strong-minded women going to nature give an amusing counterpoint to such images. In practice, female artists did try to protest the barriers placed upon their investigations of nature: "Mrs. Brown attempted original subjects. She went with her husband on a sketching excursion to Dolgelly, and then all the long-suppressed desire to be an artist came forth, and she commenced with the greatest enthusaism, working from morning till night, sketching in all weathers, caring not a jot for wind, rain, or cold, not even for midges!" (Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.180, on

Eleanor Brown); Rosa Brett went where her brother went, equally, to take subjects from nature; but, it is worth noting the general absence from women's landscape work of storm and snow and close-up treatments of natural extremes like mountains, floods and waterfalls: the viewpoint is usually a middle-distance one, reflecting visually the actual and conventional aloofness from the experience of nature which, as Hamerton implies, she was bound to maintain.

103. Donaldson, "Woman and the Arts", published in the Builder, January 6 1866, p.7.

104. "Can't and Can, or Dare and Do - only meant for Ladies", Chambers's Journal, no.391, June 29 1861, p.411; art is specifically mentioned halfway through the story: "... I exclaimed, 'Well, this has waked some poetry in my soul! I think now, even I could write a poem on this subject, and in this this air!' 'You can't,' said Ally. Can't to me?, muttered I. And I did do it, at least, I said I did, though Ally said I didn't; and I won't put the production in here, for fear you should say I didn't also. She said she was going to sketch the west view - I declared she couldn't; but she did, though, and that right well" (p.412).

105. Clayton, op. cit., vol.1, p.397.

106. Wood, op. cit., p.26; M.H. Grant, in his Dictionary of British Landscape Painters, Leigh on Sea, 1952, describes her as "An excellent landscapist of singularly bold, sometimes extravagant, execution, with fine colour and determined drawing... In all forms she is an artist worthy of more regard than has been accorded to her". Perhaps some of her contemporary fame was due to her work being published (1819 and 1824) as etchings, which seem not to have survived. She exhibited at the RA (1809/1854), was a member of the OWS from 1813, showed at the BI (1809/55), Suffolk Street, and the New Society of Painters in Watercolour. It will be remembered that the Vernon collection contained a work from her hand, a collaboration with Mulready called "Cottage on the Banks of a River", sold in 1849 when the National Gallery divested itself of unwanted elements of the collection. She became Mrs. Arnold in 1840, but this does not seem to have diminished her output. See Pavière (landscape) and Roget (op. cit., vol.1, p.415).

107. Respectively, Illustrated London News, July 30 1859, p.105; ibid, July 16 1864, p.55; Hays, op. cit., p.21; Athenaeum, January 26 1867, p.125.

108. Respectively, Athenaeum, June 20, 1891, p.199; Daily News, 1891 page number unavailable; Hastings and St. Leonards Times, obituary signed W.R. (William Rossetti), 1891 (no page reference available).

109. I am grateful to the librarian, Margaret Gaskell, for allowing me access to the collection and facilitating my use of it; the collection consists of something over two dozen landscapes, watercolours and oils.

110. Illustrated London News, July 16 1864, p.55.

111. Art Journal, February 1 1866, p.56.

112. Respectively, Art Journal, May 1 1863, p.95; ibid, March 1 1861, p.72; ibid, March 1 1868, p.46; the latter two of these artists were considered often in this light, though it is not always clear what the critic's opinion of them is: "Mrs. Blaine has that loving predilection for Eastern things and skies, which we have found in the case of other artists absorbing. After the Desert, and the tombs and temples and monuments of Egypt and the Holy Land, and the rich horizon-colours, (fabulous to those who have not seen the real amethyst and rose and orange), we can fancy how our greens and blues, and our pleasant home scenes, shut up in hedgerows, must look tame, poor, cramped, unpoetical even" (Athenaeum, February 11 1860, p.211); "'Grasmere' by Miss Freeman Kempson, the blue mountain behind the lake at twilight, displays considerable feeling for grandeur in nature, and, although flat, has commendable colour"(Athenaeum, February 1 1868, p.178).

113. Illustrated London News, January 20 1866, p.71.

114. Hamerton, op. cit., p.351.

115. Art Journal; March 1 1867, p.88; the only work named is "Negress performing an Incantation on the Sea-shore". The others were "Portrait of a young lady in fancy dress", "Arab boy dancing to his companions", "Peasant woman of Algeria", "Study of a young arab girl", "Arab woman bathing her feet in a sacred stream", "Kabyle peasant man, noonday siesta", "Study of a negress", "Evening Prayer", "Sidi Bel Cassim taking his coffee".

116. ibid, March 1 1868, p.46.

117. Athenaeum, February 1 1868, p.178 and February 13 1869, p.247; the artist did not disdain altogether the domestic scene, exhibiting British views in the latter 1860's at Suffolk Street, for instance.

118. Spectator, June 7 1879, p.727 (reviewing the OWS).

119. Tinsley's Magazine, vol.26, Jan/June 1880, p.571.

120. For Oliver's typical output, see above, ch.4 on her patronage by the Art-Union membership; her Scottish, Welsh, Lakeland and Border scenes were also well thought of. Edith and Gertrude Martineau did not restrict themselves to landscape, Edith also painting portraits and Gertrude flower scenes, but their landscape was exclusively Scottish and Borderland (see Violet Martineau, Gertrude Martineau, London, 1925). Williams' keynote was, strictly speaking, water, though her Thames scenes predominate among her paintings. Stoddart was Scottish, in fact, and exhibited as much in her native land as in London; she occasionally moved as far south as the Borders for her subject-matter.

121. Bowkett's work was shown at the RA, BI and Suffolk Street; she was resident in London. Taylor seems to have shown only at the SFA. Exhibiting at the RA, BI and SFA, Jayne's scenes were set in different English counties, though southern locations pre-

dominated. Brett lived all her life in the Maidstone/North Kent area, though she travelled for short periods and produced work from that travelling, in addition to her domestically inspired work; see below, ch. 6 for more detailed information on Brett's subject matter.

122. Unpublished letter from Jan Reynolds, biographer of the Williams family, to the writer; I am grateful to Ms. Reynolds for her help on the subject of Caroline Williams.

123. Athenaeum, April 5 1851, p.386.

124. ibid, February 13 1869, p.247.

125. Art Journal, March 1 1869, p.82.

126. Respectively: Times, April 20 1863, p.12; Athenaeum, January 20 1866, p.99; Art Journal, March 1 1868, p.46; Spectator, February 16 1861, p.165; ibid, April 3 1858, p.380.

127. Allen Staley, The Preraphaelite Landscape, Oxford, 1973; Blunden, Rosa Brett and Alice Boyd are mentioned, under "Some Friends and Followers", very briefly - no work by these artists is illustrated. See below, ch.6, for further comment on the meaning of his neglect of Brett, in particular.

128. Poynter, op. cit., Lecture 2, p.71.

129. Surtees asserts that Blunden's enthusiasm for Ruskin was unlooked for, and amounted to infatuation; the letters she has published from Ruskin to the artist would certainly support that theory (Surtees, op. cit., p.79-140).

130. Art Journal, June 1 1867, p.145.

131. Respectively, Illustrated London News, May 28 1864, p.519; ibid, February 25 1865, p.191; ibid, February 6 1869, p.135.

132. Respectively, Athenaeum, May 28 1864, p.745; Art Journal, March 1 1869, p.82; Saturday Review, June 4 1864, p.688; Times, May 30 1867, p.6; ibid, June 5 1872, p.6; Surtees illustrates a late landscape by the artist (op. cit., p.111) but the pictures mentioned here are not now known.

133. Unpublished letters from John to Rosa, in the possession of the artists' descendants, cover the period 1851 to 1859, so the "Val d'Aosta" period (it was painted in 1858) is recorded, but what became of John Brett's relations with Ruskin is not clear. The reference to Ruskin declining to come and see both brother and sister's work is in a letter dated March 22 1860, from John to Rosa: "I shall have hardly the face to ask JR to come again - I don't think he would..."; their correspondence at this time is only erratically covered by the family's papers, so it is unclear whether this means that Ruskin had already been once, and John is reluctant to ask him to come twice, or whether John has already asked Ruskin once to come, and is shy of asking a second time. Cook and Wedderburn do not record any wor of Ruskin's concerning such a visit, or concerning Rosa Brett.

134. Sketchbooks are in the possession of various branches of the artist's family, dating mostly from the 1870's and 1880's, not full and erratically used. They contain many drawings which were not worked up into paintings, as far as can be gauged by exhibition records and surviving works. It is clear from the artist's diary (1851) and other family documents, however, that drawing was seen by her as a preliminary to painting.

135. Respectively, Spectator, April 3 1858, p.380 and Critic, March 15 1855, p.147.

136. Art Journal, February 1 1866, p.56.

137. Athenaeum, January 26 1867, p.125; Margaret Rayner is the sister in question, and Roberts' name is to the point because he is said to have encouraged or advised, if not taught, Margaret and the other sisters.

138. Art Journal, March 1 1869, p.82.

139. None of these is in either the Cambridge nor the Norwich art galleries; that they were all successfully sold seems unlikely: "Miss V. Colkett (introduced by C.A. Howell), daughter of an artist at Cambridge, now dead, called on me with some of her sketches and studies. She seems to be a nice, good girl, poor and finding it difficult to get a living by her work (making small architectural drawings at Cambridge)", recorded G.P. Boyce in his diary, on February 24 1869 (Surtees, ed., p.49). Boyce does not record that he bought any of her work, for all his sympathy!

140. She exhibited at the Academy from 1855 to 1870, and at the SFA in 1861 (showing three Italian scenes): nothing else is known of her work.

141. These works were exhibited at the SFA, Suffolk Street, RA and BI, and the Dudley; the artist showed at the SFA 1857/83, at Suffolk Street 1845/74, at the Academy 1844/56, at the BI 1832/52, and both watercolours and oils at the Dudley from 1871.

142. Art Journal, April 1 1864, p.98.

143. Her first exhibit at the Academy was "Interior" in 1866, her first at the SFA in 1867 "Exterior of St. Leonard's, Honfleur" and "Interior of St. Catherine, Honfleur", and her early works at Suffolk Street are of a similar type ("A sketch", 1867 followed by interiors in 1868 and 1869).

144. For example, "Old Castle on the Rhein" (1856), "Castle of Elt" (1855), "Castle of Ehrenburg" (1855), "St. Bartelmi, Venice" (1862).

145. Art Journal, March 1 1872, p.89; this passage was in reference to the exhibits of Victoria Colkett.

146. Hamerton, op. cit., p.351.

147. Art Journal, March 1 1868, p.46.

148. Corbaux, born in 1812, did not die until 1883; Eliza died in 1874 (born in 1796) and Mary Ann Sharpe died in 1867; Carpenter who had been born in 1793, survived until 1872.

149. Given the National Portrait Gallery's anthropological rather than aesthetic criteria, these works are quire various: the Allingham is an undated watercolour, Eastlake's is a watercolour (d.1846), Lane's drawing a watercolour full-length (d.1850), Wedderburn's piece is a watercolour of "Sir Robert Peel showing his pictures" inscribed March 9th 1844, Pusey's is a pen and ink drawing (1856), while the Thornycroft is a sculptured bust in bronze (undated).

150. In 1858, she exhibited "The little Boatbuilder", "The Contrabandista" and "Portrait of Dr. Neil Arnott" and in 1863 "John Gibson".

151. The National Portrait Gallery has a copy of her sitters' book, which is a record kept by the artist of the portraits she painted, for whom and at what price, when.

152. Athenaeum, February 15 1851, p.195; Sir Charles Holmes, "The Heirs of Lawrence", Burlington Magazine, July/December 1936, p.195.

153. Her sitters' book records the following figures: 1836, 24; 1837, 32; 1838, 32; 1839, 35; 1840, 29; 1841, 25; 1842, 20; 1843, 23; 1844, 26. The figure for 1839 is the highest in the period from 1812 to 1866.

154. Respectively, Athenaeum, November 23 1872, p.671; Art Journal, June 1 1854, p.160; Sir Charles Holmes, op. cit, p.196.

155. Respectively, Art Journal, March 1 1849, p.78; ibid, June 1 1849, p.167; ibid, June 1 1849, p.172; Art Union, June 1 1847, p.199.

156. The Eton portraits are of Henry Traill Erskine, John Duke Coleridge, William Charles Cotton, Stafford Henry Northcote, Thomas Thelluson Carter, Sir John Mordaunt, James H.R. Ker, John Wickens, James R. Hope, Robert N. Cust, Charles Broderick Scott, J.P.W. Bastard, and B.W.F. Drake. They are mostly half-lengths (some heads), all but four measuring 30" x 25" (the others measuring $9\frac{1}{2}$" x $7\frac{3}{4}$"), and are related in some cases to other work which the artist did: the Cotton name crops up again for instance, in her sitters' book (Mr. Cotton twice in 1832, twice in 1839, twice in 1846; Lady Cotton in 1840 and 1841), and Sir John Mordaunt is recorded in 1829, while Lady Mordaunt's name features in 1838 and 1839, and Augusta Thellusson's fine likeness is one of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery's Carpenters. (See Geoffrey Agnew, Eton Portraits, 1970 and James McConnell, Treasures of Eton, London, 1976; both writers give only thirteen of the leaving portraits to Carpenter). The artist has made more than one portrait of Sumner: the NPG quarter length, dated 1852, was exhibited at the RA that year; she showed a portrait of the sitter as Bishop of Chester at the same gallery in 1839; while Eton college has a half-length seated portrait of the Archbishop, which college authorities maintain is by the artist, which resembles but for its extended size the NPG picture.

157. The sitter and parrot is a motif which recurs in mid-nineteenth century French and British painting, and seems to have attracted Carpenter a few times: "Child and Parrot" appeared at the BI in

1851, and may be the "Girl with a Perroquet" sold from the Birch collection in February 1856 for 33 gns.; the Vernon collection contained in 1847 a "Lady and Parrot", described thus in the Art Union (November 1 1847, p.366): "The figure is life-sized, and presented at half-length, holding a cage containing a green parrot, to which the lady gives a piece of sugar through the wires. She is attired in a red robe with yellow sleeves, and is amply endowed with vitality" - this was sold from the collection, as "Lady feeding Parrot in Cage", in 1849 (Art Journal, August 1 1849, p.251) for 32 gns.; a further female sitter with parrot is the "Lady and Parrot" dated 1852 formerly in a private collection in America, of which the National Portrait Gallery's archives contain a photograph: this features a woman with a parrot on her lap (no cage), grey and red (not green), seated in a domestic interior.

158. "The Love Letter", formerly the property of Frost and Reed of London, is a watercolour, whereas the other, which is a life-sized portrait of Anthony Steward, miniature painter, is an oil.

159. For example, "Lady Grosvenor" (1865), "The Lady Douglas" and "The Countess of Horne" (1873), "Princess Beatrice" (1860), "The Princess of Wales" (1864).

160. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.254.

161. Illustrated London News, June 8 1867, p.578 and Athenaeum, June 1 1861, p.733 and Spectator, June 9 1860, p.553.

162. Waterford to Osborne, January 23 1861 and January 29 1867, quoted in Hare, op. cit., vol.3, p.133 and p.286; some of her work for Waterford is illustrated in this work.

163. Gillies' portraits were rather large for miniatures (e.g. 12" x $9\frac{1}{2}$", 8" x $5\frac{1}{2}$") but must still be so called; for Pearson/Dutton see Art Journal, June 1 1871, p.166 for an obituary notice and see J. Foster, Dictionary of Miniature Painters, London, 1926 for her and Kendrick. Clayton says that Kendrick published a work on the subject in 1850, but the British Museum catalogue lists only the 1830 work (Clayton, op. cit., vol.1, p.393). For Tekusch, see Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.259 and Foster, op. cit.

164. See Katharine McCook Knox, The Sharples..., New York, 1972; and Petersen and Wilson, Women Artists, London, 1978 and Bristol City Art Gallery, Catalogue of Oil Paintings, Bristol, 1970; the Royal West of England Academy in Bristol has archival material relating to the family and its careers.

165. Harriet Martineau, Autobiography, London, 1857, vol.1, p.389.

166. She is mentioned briefly in Ruskin's correspondence and diaries, in 1867 (see Evans and Whitehouse, Ruskin's Diaries, Oxford, 1858, vol.2, p.638); she exhibited at the RA 156/9, at the SFA 1869/70; Houfe, op. cit., p.363, calls her a miniature painter.

167. They were dominated by Hayter, who became, in subsequent editions, the sole artist employed, but included Francis Grant, Henry Weigall, and C. Durham.

168. Grant showed at the Academy in London from 1866 to 1892; Paton/Hill from 1863 to 1874.

169. A.G.K. L'Estrange, Lady Belcher and her Friends, London, 1891, p.187; Lady Diana Belcher, née Joliffe, exhibited at the SFA 1857/66, and at various amateur or charitable shows in the early 1860's, apparently ceasing to work in 1864.

170. Art Journal, April 1 1872, p.112; ibid, March 1 1874, p.88.

171. See Jopling, op. cit., p.325/350, where she lists her exhibited works between 1868 and 1887.

172. The artist's child pictures usually used her own offspring as models; the descendants of the artist have a large oil of Flora, picturesquely dressed and holding a doll, which has not been identified with any of the artist's exhibited works, but which has the air of a fancy picture rather than of a straightforward portrait.

173. For comment on the work, see Nochlin and Harris, op. cit., p.228; it is privately owned in the USA: I am grateful to the ownér for the interest he has shown in this work.

174. This drawing was sold at Sotheby's, 29 January 1980. The artist showed miniature portraits and female figure subjects, at the RA, the Old and the New Societies of Painters in Water-colour.

175. Herford's work is in the possession of the sitter's descendants; Herford was, herself, a pioneer for women's rights, of course, in her field (see above, ch.2) and was the aunt of another female artist who made a mark, Helen Paterson (Allingham). Herford herself, dying so young (at the age of 39, in 1870) left very few works to perpetuate her name.

176. Exhibited at the RA in 1863: "... something more than a graceful portrait of herself... Mrs. Newton's head is one of the best pieces of colour among the portraiture of the year, and is excellently drawn besides" (Times, May 5 1863, p.7); "There is no better lady's portrait than Mrs. Newton's portrait of herself" (Spectator, May 23 1863, p.2036).

177. Rayner's picture was shhown at the RA in 1858, Hall's at the SFA in 1861, Anderson's at the SBA in 1864, Brown's at the Dudley in 1869, and Beale's at the RA in 1871. There are other works which might be of the same ilk, but whose character is impossible to tell from a title only: Bridell Fox's "The future Artist" (RA, 1849), Mrs. F.P. Fellows' "A lady modelling" (SFA, 1858), Emma Gaziotti Richards' "Portrait of the Artist" (RA, 1851), L. Hill's "Interior of a studio" (BI, 1852/SFA, 1858). Claxton's drawings were described on exhibition as follows: "For pungent caricature, sarcastic and yet playful, we have seldom seen anything better... the child drawing from the looking-glass, the studio with the strong-minded woman, and the rejected picture, are such sketches as Jane Eyre would have made had she painted instead of written" (Athenaeum, April 3 1858, p.439); "Miss Claxton is evidently what ladies call - or used to call - a 'quiz': and these sketches evince so much raciness and

good humour that some young gentlemen of our acquaintance would willingly compete to be laughed out of countenance by her. Nor is there any lack of artistic style in her designs" (Spectator, April 3 1858, p.380). Compare the artist's "A Conversazione" (1867, fig.258) and Adelaide Claxton's "Christmas Belles" (1864, fig.259). The former image is commented upon in the (unattributed) gloss accompanying the drawing: "That strong-minded looking lady next him is undeniably a member of the same (artistic) profession; but I object to her myself as conventional. Why should people refuse to recognise the 'female artist' unless so cruelly caricatured?" (p.379).
The most discussed form of the type, though, in recent time, must be Osborn's "Nameless and Friendless" of 1857, although it is not clearly certain if this means, in fact, to be a portrait of the female artist; the Spectator review of the Academy that year spotted the scene's ambiguity (which endures): "The scene is the interior of a printseller's shop, to which a widow and her boy have brought some artistic essays, over which the master rubs his chin and shakes his ominous head. It is not very clear whether the boy or the mother is the artist; we presume the former, but he is almost too childish in that case" (Spectator, July 4 1857, p.715). Linda Nochlin confidently interprets the female figure as the artist (Nochlin and Harris, Women Artists 1550/1950, Los Angeles and New York, 1977, p.54), and identifies the woman as an orphan and a single woman, but does not posit any relationship between the female figure and the boy. That this painting does, in fact, constitute a sort of self-portrait, is supported by James Dafforne in the Art Journal in 1864 ("British Artists, their style and character", no.75, September, 1, p.261) and by a profile of Osborn in the Lady (September 2 1886, p.183), which identify the woman as the artist and the boy as her brother. This relationship, but not the identity of the artist, was retained by McDonald, who captioned the engraved work, "A gentlewoman reduced to dependence upon her brother's art" (McDonald, op. cit., p.96).

178. Redgrave gives 21 portraitists, and 14 miniaturists, and 31 amateurs. Clayton's were: Maria C. Burt, Grace Cruikshank, Annie Dixon, Charlotte Dixon, Ellen Hill, Ellen Montalba, Margaret Tekusch, Margaret Thomas. Carpenter appeared in volume i, in which painters were not divided into genre categories.

179. For the different categorisations used by modern scholars, see the standard surveys of the period, see Maas, Bell, Gaunt and Reynolds, op. cit. and for the primacy of the narrative form in the period, see Sacheverall Sitwell, Narrative Pictures, London, 1969 and Raymond Lister, Victorian Narrative Paintings, London, 1966 and Rosemary Treble, Great Victorian Pictures, Arts Council GB (London) 1978.

180. The Art Journal, in the mid-60's, showed the contemporary confusion as to the most accurate (never mind the most useful) division of genres, by using such varying categorisations as "Subjects Poetic and Imaginative", "Outdoor Figures - rude, rustic, and refined", "Compositions - literal, imaginative, and poetic", "Scenes Domestic: slow, pathetic, and gay"; and, in

reviewing the Academy in 1864, vouchsafed the following uncertainty as to how best to class the different subject pictures: "Under the designation of 'High Art' we have just passed in review several works which can lay little or no claim to the honourable distinction; and now, in like manner, for the sake of some intelligible classification, we must throw together, under the present heading, pictures widely differing from each other. The division upon which we enter occupies an intermediate and extended terrotory, lying between historic Art as an upper frontier, and the genre of the Dutch school at its lower extremity" (Art Journal, June 1 1864, p.160).

181. Spectator, May 11 1850, p.451.

182. Times, May 26 1852, p.10; this review goes on to suggest that the Academy is not only misogynist, but anti-Semitic too.

183. Maas (op. cit.) indexes 15 women artists, Bell (op. cit.) five, Gaunt (op. cit) two, and Reynolds (op. cit.) five.

184. Emma Sandys was the sister of Frederick Sandys; Joanna Boyce the sister of G.P. Boyce; Emily Hunt a sister and pupil of W. Holman Hunt; Elizabeth Siddal the partner, later wife, of D.G. Rossetti; Marie Spartali a favourite model of Burne-Jones; Lucy and Catherine Madox Brown daughters of Ford Madox Brown; Blunden an intimate of Ruskin. J.E. Millais' sister, Judith, seems also to have done some drawing, as did Effie Gray/Ruskin/ Millais.

185. Respectively, The Chromolithograph, December 7 1867, p.46 reviewing the work of Mrs. F. Thomas at 20 Cockspur Street; Athenaeum, February 8 1862, p.197, reviewing the SFA exhibition; Spectator, April 3 1858, p.380, reviewing the SFA exhibition; Athenaeum, March 17 1854, p.346 of Howitt's "Margaret" National Institution; ibid, November 2 1867, p.579 of Benham Hay's "A Florentine Procession" at the French Exhibition.

186. Athenaeum, May 15 1869, p.675 and Times, May 1 1869, p.12; the work is now unlocated. It is not known whether the artist was a part of Whistler's circle, or not. Jopling, however, certainly was, and her portrait was painted by the American artist in 1877 ("Harmony in black and flesh colour", Glasgow (Hunterian)). The Art Journal review of the SFA (SLA) in 1876 suggests that she might have come quite close in spirit to the American artist, also, though in a less radical way (though Whistler is not mentioned by name).

187. Hurlstone's two paintings were shown at the SBA; the former is discussed below. Chilman's two drawings were at the SBA, Brown's at the Manchester exhibition. Farmer's pair of drawings were shown at the winter exhibition of the New Society (Institute) of Painters in Watercolour, Smith's work at the SBA, and Howitt's painting at the National Institution. The current whereabouts of none of these pictures is known. MEE showed herself partial to the paired image in painting, too, with her "Envy" and "Discontent", and "Virgo Sapiens" and "Virgo Impreudens", at the French (Winter) Exhibition in 1864.

188. See Fine Art Society exhibition catalogues, Travellers (FAS, June/July 1880) and Eastern Encounters (FAS, June/July 1878) for an idea of the breadth of the trend, in terms of subject matter.

189. Martineau was extremely critical of the harem and the social context which allowed it: "I saw two Hareems in the East; and it would be wrong to pass over them in an account of my travels; though the subject is as little agreeable as any I can have to treat..." (Martineau, Eastern Life, present and past, London, 1848, vol.2, p.147ff). See also Butler's autobiography (Butler, op. cit., p.209) for a later account.

190. Browne's work in this taste is referred to by Clayton (op. cit., vol.2, p.66): "Her Oriental scenes were much admired. Among these were "A Court in Damascas", "Nubian Dancing Girls" (Witt coll.)and a "Harem in Constantinople"." - This last could be the "Interior of the Harem" shown at Gambart's in 1862, and noticed thus by the Spectator: "... noticeable for a broad effect of light, and the air of lassitude pervading the figures" (April 26, 1862, p.466); The Witt library also contains a "Turkish Scene" and an oriental "The Parrot". Jerichau's work was also mentioned by Clayton (op. cit., vol.2, p.106); Anderson's picture was shown at the Winter Exhibition, 1876/7.

191. Martineau's heads were, respectively, exhibited at the Fine Art Society, November 1881, and sold at Sotheby's, March 20, 1879; the Carpenter tentatively thus identified here, is extant in a reproduction in the archives of the National Portrait Gallery: the artist exhibited nothing under this title at this date, but did show a "Visit to the Harem" at the BI in 1833, while her "Portrait in Oriental Costume" at the RA in 1858 was, in the Art Journal's words, "so happily treated, that the result is rather a picture than a portrait" (Art Journal, June 1 1858, p.170) - it seems unlikely that this and the present image are the one and the same, however; Jopling's piece is mentioned in her autobiography (p.325), but without any detail as to content.

192. Severn's drawings were shown at the Dudley in 1866 (posthumously), Fox's and Bodichon's at their joint exhibition in 1866 and among their annual exhibited work. None of Fox's landscapes are now located, Bodichon's survive in the Girton College collection, in the possession of Mr. John Crabbe (to whom I am grateful for sharing his interest in Bodichon), and in the possession of the descendants of Hercules Brabazon, as well as being visible at Hastings Art Gallery.

193. Hurlstone's picture was shown at the SFA, Gaziotti Richards at the BI, while Corbaux's drawing was made for publication in Baxter's Pictorial Album or Cabinet of Paintings, and was described in the book's preface thus: "A Persian girl, lovely as a Houri in Mahomet's Paradise, is about to despatch a message to her lover - to the youth whose image is impressed on her heart, and on whom her mind dwells...", revealing it as a romantic fancy picture in costume (quoted by P. Muir, Victorian Illustrated Books, London, 1971, p.153).

194. Both in the Guildhall, London.

195. Art Journal, March 1 1861, p.72.

196. Shown, respectively, at the Winter Exhibition, Society of Female Artists, Suffolk Street; whereabouts unknown.

197. Art Journal, May 1 1858, p.143.

198. Exhibited, respectively, at the BI, Suffolk Street, RA, SFA, BI.

199. The motif seems to have risen at the RA c.1849 (in which light it is interesting to note that a Miss Clater showed a "Gleaners" at Manchester in 1846) and male artists exhibiting gleaners at the Academy between then and 1854 included the following distinguished and undistinguished names: J. Hollins (1849); G.H. Andrews, E.J. Cobbett, J.E. Williams (1850); H.W. Pearsall, Frith and Creswick (1851); H. Shirley, G. Browning (1852); W. Lee (1854); a later work on the subject, P.F. Poole's "The Gleaner", illustrated in the Art Journal in November 1864, can perhaps be taken as reliably representative of the theme in British artists' hands: its subject is young and female, the only real subject of the picture, and recalls rather the shepherdesses than the gleaners of the subject's most celebrated exponent, J-F Millet. Another interesting example of the subject is Thomas and Mary Thornycroft's Great Exhibition exhibit (one of several) of the "Princess Royal as a Gleaner" (item 34, illustrated fig.144, p.845 in the official catalogue). This statue was accompanied by the "Prince of Wales as a shepherd".

200. Exhibited, respectively, at Suffolk Street, SFA, the Dudley, RA, Suffolk Street, SFA, while Brett did not make finished works from her sketches. The wide interest in the business of hop-growing and its lore can be seen from such articles as "Hops and Hop-picking", The Leisure Hour, October 16 1856, p.663, and incidents in literature, as David Copperfield's meeting with hoppers, while an article in the Illustrated Times of 1855, "Wayside Pictures" (October 27 1855, p.342) implies a fashion for artists to set their scenes in Kent - the accompanying illustration shows a male (serious) artist.

201. Art Journal, March 1 1861, p.72 and Athenaeum, February 19 1859, p.258.

202. Richard Redgrave, "The Governess" or "The Poor Teacher", 1843 (Gateshead AG) and 1844 (Forbes Magazine Collection); see R. Treble, Great Victorian Pictures, Arts Council GB, 1978, p.71 for a discussion of the latter work. These images are discussed in relation to other images of women by male artists in an interesting essay by Helene E. Roberts, "Marriage, Redundancy or Sin: the Painter's View of Women in the first twenty-five years of Victoria's Reign", in Martha Vicinus, Suffer and be Still, 1972, Indiana.

203. Art Journal, May 1 1852, p.137; whereabouts unknown. The artist was an exhibitor at the RA (six works between 1846 and 1850), and SFA (1857/8), but showed mostly at Suffolk Street, where her husband was prominent. Her work was in oils and watercolour, usually figurative (portraits at first). Of the work in question,

the Illustrated London News offered the following comment: "a small panoramic homily... which we could wish had been spared us..." (April 24 1852, p.324), but it went on to give a graphic description of the painting, nevertheless.

204. Illustrated London News, July 15 1854, p.37.

205. See Surtees, op. cit., p.79.

206. The source is Martin Tupper.

207. Mrs. E.W. Cox, "The Governess", The Keepsake, 1856, p.112.

208. Redgrave's governess (see note 202, above) is seated alone in a room beyond which her young charges play blithely in the open sunlight of a garden.

209. Illustrated London News, June 9 1860, p.563.

210. James Dafforne's "British Artists, their style and character", no.75, Art Journal, September 1 1864, p.261.

211. Saturday Review, June 2 1860, p.709; for a different sort of proof of the motif's currency, see Mrs. S.C. (Anna Maria) Hall's Stories of the Governess, London ,1852, which includes moral tales on "The old Governess", "The Governess", and "The daily Governess" and is illustrated with a range of governess images, in the form of small drawings in the text, the authors of which are not credited, but one of which (p.11) is Henrietta Ward (though this particular illustration does not depict a governess but a small child: the drawing is reproduced in Ward, op. cit., facing p.22, unidentified.)

212. English Art in 1884, Henry Blackburn ed., New York, 1884, p.159; the keepers of the Royal Collection can offer no information as to the fate of Queen Victoria's Osborn works, other than to surmise the "Governess"'s destruction in 1924 (when there was a royal purge on Victoria's collection).

213. Claxton's treatment of the motif is notable for the number of figures she takes on, in contrast to the symbolic single figure that most versions of the subject displayed; her governesses, also, show a range of class and age which is relevant to the issue, whereas most painted governesses were of Jane Eyre's mould, young and middle class. The caption to Claxton's two drawings reminds the reader of the numbers involved - "the female population of the land exceeds that of the male by nearly half a million petticoats... the bonnets outnumber the coattails by such a multitude..." - and of the peculiarly class-bound nature of the issue - "What, in the name of mercy, is to become of Captain Nelson's three girls when it comes to his turn to go up aloft and the half-pay ceases? Imagine the graceful Selina, the best waltzer at the county ball, weeping over the Times and "Wanted a Governess"; - picture the accomplished Catherine, who ever insisted on twelve yards to her skirts, reduced to ballet dancing in the mantle department; fancy the delicate Margaret, who was ordered to take port wine with her luncheon, immolating herself behind a pastrycook's counter by recommending three-cornered puffs!" (Illustrated Times, June 6 1863, p.393).

214. The picture was reproduced on the cover of the Illustrated London News, July 17 1875, and reviewed May 22 1875, p.486; Times, May 24 1875, p.5.

215. Athenaeum, June 5 1875, p.757 and Spectator, May 22 1875, p.660.

216. "Our Housemaid" was exhibited at the RA, and remains untraced; "Doris" and "Peep-bo" (the former unexhibited, the latter shown at the RA) were among the paintings destroyed in an air raid in the second World War while in the possession of the artist's descendants.

217. Exhibited, respectively, at the BI, SFA, SFA, SFA, while Claxton's drawing was one of the series "Illustrated Times or the Hours AM and PM" for the Illustrated Times (January 23 1864, p.61). This series is a good suggestion of the repertoire of female types within the artist's reach in the mid-century.

218. See Ward's "The first step" (1860) and Emily Crawford's "In the Nursery" (1869), and another drawing in Claxton's "Illustrated Times", "Washerwoman's Tea" (February 20 1864, p.124).

219. Exhibited, respectively, at Suffolk Street, Glasgow, SFA (this was a sculpture); Martineau's drawing was exhibited at none of her usual venues (OWS, SFA, Dudley), but appeared in Sparrow, op. cit., p.111.

220. Athenaeum, July 27 1861, p.123 (v.2). The artist had addressed herself in a most piquant manner to this subject the year before, in her eight illustrations to the verse narrative "Married Off", by H.B., which tells of a match-making mother finding suitable husbands for her three daughters, the married off persons of the title; needless to say, marrying off one's daughters is seen to be quite a ludicrous and shameful business, especially when conducted by Mrs. Goit, in Newport, for the ostensible benefit of the misses Rose, Lilly and Tulip. Adelaide Claxton's graphic discussion of the theme is typically displayed in the 1875 publication "A shillingsworth of sugar-plums", again in collaboration with a verbal satirist, this time C.H. Ross; the drawings include "The Business of Marriage", "The drawing-room Hogarth: marriage not at all à la mode" and "Dreadful examples of misplaced affection."

221. Exhibited, respectively, at the OWS, Suffolk Street, SFA, SFA. Georgina Swift was sister to Kate Swift; their mother, Mrs. E.H. Swift, also exhibited at the SFA. Louise B. Swift seems also to have been related to them.

222. It is interesting to speculate on why the Continental Genre is not often dwelt upon at much length by surveys of the period, because it was very typical of the prolific use of female imagery, of the 'John Bullism' which made the foreigner such a quaint object of fascination for the English artist, and of the increasing variety of female images which animated the period's pictures. It could be because male artists who essayed the type rarely did so to the exclusion of other types, so have nearly always produced some work in another, perhaps more interesting genre, which attracts the scholar, historian or picture-fancier more (and, as has already been asserted, it has been , by and large, the practice of male artists which has determined the coverage which has been made of the period.)

223. Exhibited, respectively, at Suffolk Street, Suffolk Street, SFA, SFA, SFA, Suffolk Street, SFA, SFA, SFA.

224. Exhibited, respectively, at Suffolk Street, the Scandinavian Exhibition, Suffolk Street, RA, SFA, RA.

225. Art Journal, July 1 1852, p.205; the painting was a product of the artist's honeymoon trip to Belgium and France (see further below, chapter 6).

226. Spectator, June 6 1857, p.594.

227. Her contributions to the first SFA exhibition suggests the typical range of contexts on which she drew: "Hadj Mohammed Ben Aboo", "A Tenerife Market Girl", "Ravine of Pasa Alto, Tenerife", "H.M. King Otho of Greece", "Sketch of Tenerife Peasants", "The Town of the Villa, Valley of Oratava", "Portrait of Signor Coletti", "Funchal, Madeira", "Call me what you will", "Moorish Girl", "Portrait of the Son of Sultan Abdul Medjid", "Dolores Ruiz, a gypsy dancer", "Idleness".

228. Athenaeum, April 3 1858, p.439; the whereabouts of these works, and those mentioned above, note 246, are now unknown.

229. "Rivals..." was shown at the New Society (Institute) in 1863, to the following comment from the Art Journal: "Severer study, especially in the forms of the drapery, and greater detail in execution, will give to the genius of this lady yet more worthy development" (Art Journal, June 1 1863, p.119). The Illustrated London News engravings appeared, respectively, on March 26 1859, p.305 and April 9 1859, p.353.

230. Respectively, Art Journal, June 1 1865, p.175; ibid, June 1 1868, p.112; Critic, April 7 1860, p.437.

231. Illustrated London News, March 30 1861, p.282.

232. Her own account of her journey appears in a diary, as yet unpublished, which she kept while away and which is in the possession of her grandson. See below, chapter 6, for more of this.

231. Exhibited, respectively, at the Winter Exhibition, Suffolk Street, Suffolk Street, SFA, Winter Exhibition, while French settings abound from 1854, in her exhibited works. Small landscapes in the possession of the artist's descendants, untitled but evidently of Continental countryside, are dated April, May and June 1850.

232. Those debating women artists in this period were readier to use these women as exemplars than older artists such as Damer, Moser, Beale, Kauffmann or Sirani, who, in fact, were not infrequently in the debate criticised to the advantage of such as Bonheur, Browne, or Jerichau; see, in this light, Palgrave, op. cit.

233. The Illustrated London News made a point out of the conspicuousness of the French exhibitors in the 1861 show: "Another noteworthy feature in the present exhibition is the inclusion of a large number of contributions by foreign female artists, an evidence of fraternisation - if we may use the expression -

between the ladies at home and abroad", noting "the unmistakable superiority of the French contributors, who habitually enjoy the advantages of artistic training, over those by native "female artists", who, unfortunately, have hitherto, as a rule, been utterly without assistance in that way..." (February 16 1861, p.152). The Spectator's critic more circumspectly suggested that the foreign artists' works "may serve at least as a foil to those of our countrywomen" (February 16 1861, p.165). See the Art Journal's report of the 1849 Salon, for a suggestion that French female artists were some of the best artists of the time, on their own ground (August 1 1849, p.256): "Perhaps, however, the best work in the collection is from a female hand..."

234. "Modern Painters of Belgium", Art Journal, January '66 to March '67, part 13, March 1 1867, p.69; Geefs née Corr, exhibited at the RA 1847 and 1849. She was the only female artist, and the final artist, of the series.

235. Gambart first held the French Exhibition in 1854; the German Exhibition not only showed German artists, but also hosted charity and occasional shows during the 1860's.

236. Times, December 11 1873, p.5; Ruskin was an enthusiast for Frère, also, and the artist consolidated his popularity by exhibiting regularly at the RA from 1868 to 1885. For biography of the artist and reproduction of typical works, see Gabriel P. Weisberg, The Realist Tradition, Cleveland/Indiana, 1980.

237. Art Journal, February 1 1866, p.56.

238. Respectively, Times, March 24 1863, p.12; Fine Arts Quarterly, May 1864, p.311; Illustrated Times, November 11 1865, p.299. None of the artist's works discussed here are currently traced, in this country, at least. She strengthened her ties with the Continent, although continuing to exhibit at the RA until 1880, by becoming an Honorary Member of the Belgian Watercolour Painters' Society in 1871.

239. Art Journal, March 1 1871, p.90; she did not exhibit in 1870.

240. Art Journal, June 1 1871, p.150; "In 1862, the artist went to Germany,... In 1868 Miss Osborn lost her mother, and for two years did no work of importance; then for six months she and her sister devoted themselves to nursing the sick and wounded in the Franco-Prussian War, returning to Munich when it was over, and renewing the acquaintance of Professor von Piloti, who had before given her valuable advice and assistance" (The Lady, September 2 1886, p.183).

241. Times, February,8, 1858, p.9.

242. "Cottage Interior", sold at Sotheby's, November 21 1972, was exhibited as "The Baby Brother" (SFA 1864)(no recorded exhibit of 1853 or 1854 would correspond with the image); "Granny's Lesson" appeared at the RA; "Our little Brother" at Suffolk Street; "A village school near Boulogne" at the SFA (the year after "A village school near Portel, France" at the RA); "Helping Granny" was at the SFA, and later at Liverpool - all these works have disappeared; "Baby's first Shoes", now in the

possession of the artist's descendants, was not exhibited under that title, while "A Skein of Worsted" was shown at Sheffield, and "The Firstborn" was shown at the SFA (in 1865, though the canvas is clearly dated 1866).

243. Exhibited, respectively, at the RA, unknown, Winter Exhibition and Liverpool, RA, unknown, RA. Non-domestic works in which the artist used her children include "Antwerp Market" and "Chatterton".

244. Ward, Reminiscences, p.88.

245. The quietly but consistently positive images of family life in a domestic setting of the Hayllar sisters - Edith, Jessica, Mary, and Kate - are, sadly, beyond the scope of this survey, being products of the 1880's and 1890's.

246. Jopling does not discuss this work in her autobiography, so one wonders how meaningful the theme was to her, but its lassitude and forlorn mood contrast markedly with the "Good Night" of a decade later (1886), which is as warm as the other is chilly. At the 1883 RA, however, she exhibited a work with the title "Saturday Night, searching for the Breadwinner. Paynight, drink night, crime night." The Claxton caption appears on December 5 1863, p.361.

247. Critic, May 1 1848, p.223; the artist was Clifford Smith, who had exhibited at Suffolk Street since 1844 (and showed at the National Institution in 1853, a gleaner picture), whose titles indicate a range of genres, from the fancy portrait to the literary. She is not to be confused with Mrs. Caroline Smith of Cork and London, exhibiting Irish genre scenes from 1849 to 1856, nor with Mrs. C.H. Smith, miniature painter of London, nor with Mrs. Clarendon Smith, exhibiting later in the period.

248. Of Bowkett's two works, the former is destroyed while the latter was sold from the Alexander Gallery in 1976; Boyce's picture is destroyed; MEE's appeared in the Illustrated London News (on the cover) Christmas number, December 1878; Osborn's picture, now untraced, appeared at the RA and in the Illustrated London News, July 15 1865, p.37; Swift's three works, now untraced, all were shown at the SFA and subsequently engraved in the Illustrated London News, March 17 1860, p.265, April 29 1865, p.412, and May 23 1863, p.568, respectively; Bartholomew's picture was at the SFA, and went unremarked by critics who did pick out her other exhibits, "A Marseilles Minstrel" and "Grapes and Apples".

249. Dr. Deborah Cherry's work on women's work of the whole of the Victorian period includes some interesting discussion of this point, which considers specifically the two pictures by Bowkett here mentioned. I am indebted to Dr. Cherry for much stimulating debate on the general questions this topic raises, and for a continuing and fruitful exchange of ideas and information about the work of such artists as Bowkett.

250. Exhibited, respectively, at the RA, SFA, French Exhibitions (engraved next year in the Graphic as "Sweet my child, I live for thee", April 27 1872, p.397), SFA, SFA, Suffolk Street (and

subsequently in the Illustrated London News, April 18 1868, p.389), RA. Surtees suggests that Blunden's "The Daguerrotype" (SFA, 1858) shows two women lamenting an absent husband/father, also: "It represented a mother and child gazing at a likeness of the absent father, while foliage bright with autumn colouring is seen through the window" (op. cit., p.91, n.2); the Art Journal's comment leaves this interpretation open to some doubt, however: "Presenting two figures - an elder and a younger sister - well drawn, agreeably coloured, and brought together with true artistic feeling; but the picture behind the latter diminishes the importance of the head; this should be removed" (May 1 1858, p.143).

251. Exhibited, respectively, at Suffolk Street, Suffolk Street and Manchester, SFA, SFA, Winter Exhibition (and SFA, 1858, as "News from the Seat of War"), National Institution (Free).

252. The first of Osborn's works, now untraced, was shown at the Winter Exhibition and subsequently engraved in the Art Journal (August 1 1868, p.148), while "For the last Time", now in private collection, London, appeared at the RA; Swift's picture was at the SFA (subsequently engraved in the Illustrated London News, April 13 1867, p.373); Burgess' drawing, now in the Dixon bequest to Bethnal Green Museum, was shown at the SFA; Backhouse's at the same exhibition, with a Tennyson tag; Anderson's seems not to have been exhibited, but was engraved in 1877 (see Benedict Nicholson, Treasures of the Foundling Hospital, Oxford, 1972).

253. The first five of these works are still owned by the Hospital (see Nicholson, op. cit.); there is a small picture in the possession of the artist's family of a foundling girl, which could beeither the 1852 or the 1853 work; while the girls singing in chapel at the hospital has disappeared (the Athenaeum wrote that "The Orphans" "takes a distinguished place. These girls are holding a book as if singing from it; their figures are cleverly drawn, their expressions are pathetic, varied, and natural, and the design is valuable as a whole" (March 5 1864, p.342)). The artist also showed "Les Orphelins" at the SFA in 1871.

254. Boyce's works are in the possession of the artist's descendants, which seems appropriate because, despite having been exhibited, they are very intimate pieces, largely because of their size and the way in which the heads fill the tight picture-space; Anderson's two works, on the other hand, are less private, because less small and because they admit an open space behind the heads: suitably, the latter is in a public collection (Birmingham AG) while the former was sold at Sotheby's June 27, 1978. Of Perugini (Dickens')'s two pictures, the former was sold at Christie's, July 25 1975, while the latter is untraced. The Brownlow and Backhouse works are untraced.

255. Whereabouts of both unknown; the former was engraved in the Illustrated London News, May 23 1863, p.568.

256. Athenaeum, February 13 1869, p.247, describing "The happy Mother" at the SFA.

257. Respectively, Illustrated London News, December 25 1869, p.663; Spectator, April 27 1861, p.445; ibid, June 10 1865, p.641; Times, February 20 1869, p.4; none of these drawings is presently known.

258. Times, June 1 1857, p.9.

259. Both paintings are in the possession of the artist's descendants; the former is dated 1857, and is possibly one of the heads exhibited in 1935; the latter may be a product of the artist's Italian journey in 1857, also, or perhaps the "Carminello" from 1858, 1935's no.24 (see below, ch.6, n.104).

260. Exhibited, respectively, at the SFA, SFA, SFA, SFA, SFA, Dudley, Dudley, not shown, British Institution, SFA, Dudley, BI, not shown.

261. Hunter's picture, apparently unexhibited, was sold at Sotheby's, 11 March 1975. Farmer's was sold at Sotheby's, October 10 1979; Hunter's was sold at Roy Miles Gallery, February 1981 (the Gallery claims that it was exhibited in the Art Union exhibition that year, but it was not a prizewinning work).

262. There is some reason for supposing that the model for many of Anderson's pictures of little girls was a duaghter of the artist: an undated painting called "The artist's daughter" was sold at Sotheby's, June 29 1976, in which the likeness is strong to the girls in others of Anderson's works. "No Walk today" is in the collection of Sir David Scott, "Ladybird" and "Wait for Me" were produced for the Illustrated London News (1870), "A Foundling" was exhibited at the French Exhibition, 1870 and engraved in the Graphic (frontispiece, 1870), "Red Riding Hood" was at Suffolk Street and later in the Illustrated London News (May 9 1868, p.465), "Tiptoe", shown at the Winter Exhibition, was engraved for the Illustrated London News, November 10 1866, p.448, "Christmas Eve" was sold at Christie's, July 2 1971.

263. Exhibited, respectively, at the Winter Exhibition, Winter Exhibition, Winter Exhibition, Glasgow. She tended to send her machines to the Academy and her domestic works to other exhibitions.

264. All shown at the SFA, whereabouts now unknown.

265. Athenaeum, April 2 1853, p.423.

266. Spectator, January 29 1853, p.110.

267. Boyce's works exhibited at the Royal Academy (the latter not until 1901) and now in possession of the artist's descendants; Backhouse's shown at the RA and Suffolk Street, respectively, and whereabouts now unknown.

268. Art Journal, March 1 1873, p.79 and Illustrated London News, November 17 1866, p.469.

269. The Farmer drawing is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, while the Carpenter was owned by Frost and Reed Ltd. (London); Bridell-Fox's work is now untraced, as are Cole's and Solomon's. Fox's work was engraved on the cover of the Illustrated Times, June 18 1864, (exhibited RA that year); the description of

Solomon's picture is from the Critic, November 23 1861, p.524, reviewing the Winter Exhibition.

270. This is, surely, a visual equivalent to the use of the first person in the novel.

271. There seems to be a greater tendency for male versions to use the separate space format for narrative reasons (e.g. the Calderon and the Elmore need this distribution to make their story) and for female versions to adopt the device purely voluntarily. It should be noted that in the pictures like this which men make, the protagonist is still the female figure, although this has a different significance when the artist is male: the artist is then the agent who reveals the scene to us as voyeurs - the middleman or the showman - whereas we are the recipients of the female artist's confidences, which she reveals as a personal declaration.

272. Edwards' picture was shown at Liverpool, and when engraved in the Illustrated Times (cover, October 16 1858) was itself discussed as belonging to a type, of the 'chess-playing picture'. Siddal's choice of period is at one with Preraphaelite medievalising, as Edwards' choice of period is a similarly romanticising one; Solomon's work, shown at the RA and engraved in the Illustrated Times (June 27 1859, p.409), displays her weakness for Royalists.

273. Solomon's pictures were exhibited, respectively, at the RA (engraved Illustrated Times, cover July 23 1859), the Winter Exhibition (engraved Illustrated London News, December 15 1866, p.565) and unknown (sold at Christie's, February 3 1978). Setchell's drawing, originally shown at the New Society of Painters in Watercolour, is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum; Jerichau's work was shown at the RA, and engraved in the Illustrated London News (March 19 1870, p.296), but is presently untraced; Macirone's picture was at Suffolk Street, and is presently untraced.

274. The notion of women as great consumers of fiction (rather than of them, say, as great consumers of art), has much to do with their leisure time being both prolonged and necessarily spent indoors, privately: one needed no chaperone to read a novel (unless it were a French one!), whereas one could not go unaccompanied to a gallery. Another relevant factor is the alleged lack of intellectual effort needed to enjoy most novels of the time, while the alliance of women with the imagination (rather than with fact - man's province) had its influence here, too.

275. Farwell's painting is not now known; Edwards' drawing appeared on February 13 1864; Florence Claxton's drawings on February 14 1863, p.108 and February 17 1866, p.104 (she also provided a satirical illustration about the economic question of romance to "A Chat about Valentines", in London Society (no.28, 1864); Dunn's drawings appeared in no.50, 1866; Florence and Adelaide's drawing appeared in February 1867 (p.114); Edwards' drawing was in no.38, 1865. (Different periodicals use different referential categories when bound: the no. is meant as a substitute for a specific date, where this is not given in the volume.)

276. Bowkett's "Garden" was sold from Sotheby's, October 2 1979 and her "Young Lady" from Roy Miles Gallery, 1980; Charretie's work is untraced, but was engraved on the cover of the Illustrated Times (April 30 1870); Sandys is represented by two female fancy heads in Norwich Art Gallery (Castle Museum) and her "Saxon Princess" is privately owned in this country, while "Girl at a Window" was sold from J. Maas Gallery, Jan/Feb 1977, and "Anna and Agnes Young" from Roy Miles Gallery, February 1981 - see Theodore Crombie, "Some Portraits by Frederick Sandys", Apollo, vol.82, November 1965, p.399 for illustrations of four other romantic female busts by the artist (attributed erroneously to her brother).

277. It is unlikely that this Alice Laird is Alicia Laird, mentioned by Graves,and Foster (op. cit.), since she was a miniature painter; this watercolour was sold at Sotheby's, 22 May 1979. Anderson's work was sold from Roy Miles Gallery, June/July 1978. Osborn's was sold from Sotheby's, April 18 1978.

278. The most frequently utilised occupations for romantically appealing young ladies to be engaged in, were indoor and contemplative (rather than outdoor and active) and spiritual (rather than physical); reading and musing were particular favourites with male and female artists. Osborn's later exhibits show a typical range. It is interesting, however, that often an image of a reading female would be entitled "The fair student" or similar (Helen Mary Johnson, BI, 1867), as if to alleviate to some degree the insubstantiality of the motif.

279. "I learnt the collects and the catechism,/The creeds, from Athanasius back to Nice,/The Articles... the Tracts against the times,/(By no means Buonaventure's "Prick of Love",)/And various popular synopses of /Inhuman doctrines never taught by John... I learnt my complement of classic French/(Kept pure of Balzac and neologism,)/And German also... I learnt the royal genealogies/ of Oviedu, the internal laws/Of the Burmese empire,... by how many feet/Mount Chimborazo outsoars Himmeleh,/What navigable river joins itself/To Lara, and what census of the year five/Was taken at Klagenfurt...." (E. Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh, London, 1857). See also Palgrave, op. cit., for the significance of women's lacking education for their success in art.

280. The taste for Shakespeare can be seen as having been boosted, shortly before the mid-century, by the Palace of Westminster fresco competitions, wherein Shakespeare was one of the approved sources, and shortly before that, by the ill-fated Boydell Gallery. See W.M. Merchant, Shakespeare and the artist, Oxford, 1959, and the Studio publication discussed below, note 286.

281. None of Edwards' picture is now known, but Brown's hangs in Wightwick Manor, near Wolverhampton, on loan to the National Trust.

282. Robbinson showed "Rosalind and Celia" at the RA in 1865; Clayton mentions a "Juliet" among Jerichau's "most admired works" (op. cit., vol.2, p.106), Gillies is credited in the Dictionary of National Biography with a "Rosalind and Celia"

dating from 1857, Herford showed "Rosalind" at the BI in 1863; Corbaux' "As You Like It" appeared at the BI in 1838; even Florence Claxton showed a "Juliet" at the SFA in 1872, "highly spiced" according to the Art Journal (March 1 1871, p.90).

283. Exhibited, respectively, at the SFA, Dudley, unknown, SFA, SFA, BI.

284. Exhibited, respectively, at the BI (the following year she showed "The Banquet scene from Macbeth"), SFA, OWS, Suffolk Street, Dudley, SFA, SFA, Suffolk Street, SFA.

285. Exhibited, respectively, at the OWS, Winter Exhibition, RA.

286. It is not indicative of the general character of male artists' Shakespearean works that the most well-known is a single figure, non-active treatment which fits into the romantic fancy picture category: namely, Millais' "Ophelia" (1852, Tate Gallery). More truly reflective of the treatment of Shakespeare by male artists in the period is a collection of works published by the Studio in 1916, wherein among over 80 drawings and paintings (all by men except one by Kauffmann) which are drawn mostly from the Victorian period, hardly any are single-figure treatments - and any which are evocative rather than descriptive tend to amplify the image by the use of two figures rather than one. The most notable exceptions are Augustus Egg's charming heads "Desdemona" (p.101) and "Katharina" (p.107). The compilers seem to have deliberately chosen a range of Shakespearean sources, making any conclusions about preferred dramatis personae impossible to draw (Shakespeare in Pictorial Art, Salaman/ Holme, London, 1916.)

287. Exhibited, respectively, at the SFA, SFA, not known, SFA. Austin Carter, as will have been gathered, was particularly fond of literary sources; Sandys, too, showed Tennyson, Shakespeare and Browning subjects, as well as an "Undine", in her short exhibiting career (see Graves, RA Exhibitors); Babb showed work inspired by Shakespeare, Tennyson and Dickens. It is very clear from the exhibition records of women such as these - all, incidentally, of the younger generation (beginning to exhibit in the 1860's) - that certain female artists consciously tried to be literary painters.

288. Exhibited, respectively, at the BI, BI, SFA, BI, SFA.

289. Art Journal, May 1 1858, p.144; this work is now untraced. In one of the other works mentioned here, Jerome's "Ioachim stealing Imogen's bracelet", an illustration in the Witt library shows, the female figure dominates through the traditional method of being presented for the viewer's titillation, posed in a voluptuous arrangement of limbs and silk on a couch with one breast and shoulder exposed to view, while Ioachim emerges from the shadows behind her.
There had been such publications as Jameson's "Characteristics of Women" (1852) and Mary Cowden Clarke's "The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines" (1852) to emphasise the women in Shakespeare rather than the men; it is worth noting that the

latter publication, in its new edition of 1879, carried nine illustrations of the heroines, all by T.F. Dicksee and W.S. Herrick, probably commissioned for the book, since all of a uniform format.

290. Athenaeum, February 1 1868, p.178; this point was used to demonstrate that making pictures was not necessarily the same as being an artist, by the critic for the Victoria Magazine, reviewing the women's work at the RA two years' previously; one must assume, given the periodical's character, this passage was meant constructively:
"If, for instance, he (sic: the artist) paints a model, and when it is finished an idea comes into his mind, that the character of the face would suit this or that character in history or poetry, by adding a little appropriate background, it is easily to be understood that no really good picture can be the result. It is a kind of manufacture put together generally for saleable purposes, and the sooner he leaves the art, which by these means he degrades, the better" (Victoria Magazine, July 1866, p.247). The review was printed anonymously.

291. ibid, January 26 1867, p.125; the work is now untraced. The artist was, perhaps, a tyro in exhibition terms - she had first shown at the RA in 1864, and at the SFA the previous year - but, being the daughter of the sculptors,was not unfamiliar with art; her sisters Alyce and Theresa also exhibited to some effect during the latter 1860's and 1870's, while Helen showed at the SFA (SLA) until 1886 and at the RA until 1904 (she died in 1913.)

292. Times, June 11 1869, p.12.

293. ibid, May 9 1867, p.7; the same point was raised over a decade later by the Spectator's review of the Dudley exhibition of 1879, showing, in the sadly familiar image which is conjured up, that this listless or careless relation between image and meaning, persisted:
"We seldom speak in disparagement of a lady's work, but Miss Elizabeth Walker, almost challenges criticism for no.95, "Vanity Fair"; a title, by the way, which would be better for the transposition of its words, "Fair Vanity" being considerably more appropriate. The subject is a maiden, looking at herself with a somewhat lackadaisical expression, in a fireside mirror which reflects her face... the whole composition is surrounded as with a halo with a dreadful aimlessness and lack of meaning, which go very far to neutralise any pleasure which we might otherwise feel... No meaning of any kind can be extracted from the picture, for the girl's face neither expresses "vanity" nor any other feeling; and we can only say to Miss Walker, that we hope she will in the future not waste such painstaking work on such unmeaning themes" (Spectator, March 15 1879, p.340).
Critical accusations of wasted energy sometimes, however, simply reflected the hierarchy of genres, or the critic's prejudice about what constituted an interesting subject; reviews of the SFA shows are scattered with such asides: "'From a Window' is a poetical autumn sunset seen from a window, painted with loving care by Miss A.M. Howitt. The subject is too scanty and

does not repay the time spent upon it" (Athenaeum, April 3 1858, p.439)... "The execution, of a conventional sort, of Miss M. Gillies's lady reading an illuminated book, styled "A Romance" (72), in some respects redeems its weak sentimentality. We regret that the painter's skill has not been more worthily employed" (ibid, March 5 1864, p.342). For the question of sentimentality, see below, note 295.

294. Illustrated London News, May 22 1869, p.527; neither "Hermia" nor "Tenderness" is known now.

295. Athenaeum, March 5 1864, p.342. The handling of sentiment, which so easily becomes sentimentality - "Mrs. Anderson's half-length of a girl thinking is so rich in sentiment as to come near the verge of sentimentality" (Athenaeum, February 2 1867, p.161, reviewing Sophie Anderson's "Je pense à toi" at the BI) - was an area of contradiction for women artists; women were commonly supposed to be attuned to sentiment (sensitive, imaginative, poetical, compassionate, kind - what you will) and their work might easily be criticised for being unfeminine in feeling, whether it be called coarse or vulgar or strong-minded. It seems, however, that what was required and admired in a woman, was not what was called for in a woman artist, for accusations of an excess of sentiment or a facility of feeling were frequent; thus, "few ladies devote themselves to subjects so unsentimental" (Art Journal, May 1 1858, p.143); "Female artists seem to have a weakness for this ready-made sentiment" (ibid, March 1 1868, p.46); "As might be expected, the young ladies show a good deal of sentimentality" (Athenaeum, February 8 1862, p.197). Margaret Gillies came in for much criticism for being more full of feeling than was deemed tasteful: "Mr. Frank Holl has been employed to waste a good deal of time upon an engraving from a picture by Miss Gillies, a false and sentimental production illustrating the theme 'The heavens are telling the glory of God'... As Nature abhors a vacuum, so the human intellect abhors a piece of sham sentiment like this. Such claptrap is not art, but vanity" (Athenaeum, May 12 1860, p.655); "Miss Gillies, who, having made such a grand success with the "Past and the Future" of last year, has repeated the pretty face and upturned eyes which then struck the sentimental chord in her admirers, in no less than four out of the seven drawings she sends this year. They are all, with one exception, full of sickly affectation..." (Saturday Review, June 7 1856, p.126). The most proper female sentimentality seems to be that which critics call refinement: "'Lady Jane Grey on the morning of her execution', consoling her attendant, which if not possessing sentiment of an intense order, is at least refined and quiet in that respect, as well as in colour" (Spectator, April 1 1854, p.370, discussing Louisa Sharpe at the SBA). The contradiction, though, from which female artists suffered, as artists rather than as women, was that this refinement was, when it came down to it, rather a namby-pamby, not a compelling or challenging, quality: "The kind of excellence specially noticeable in this collection is not of itself sufficient to ensure a high pictorial achievement. Refinement is a virtue in all work, and

it is the necessary condition of even the strongest and most vigorous accomplishment in the realm of Art. But refinement is rather of negative than positive value..." (Art Journal, May 1 1874, p.146, reviewing the SLA: this passage continues to make very interesting points about the ultimately makeshift value of refinement, which is seen to be almost a defining characteristic of women's art.)

296. Athenaeum, May 20 1871, p.628.

297. Illustrated Times, June 2 1866, p.347.

298. The point is, rather, that the device was more noticeable in the work of women artists, who were more likely to lack the technical skill which could carry off such deviousness.

299. "Pictures from English Literature", Art Journal, January 1 1871, p.16.

300. Exhibited at the Dudley, at Glasgow, and at the RA, respectively; whereabouts now unknown.

301. Exhibited, respectively, at the Winter Exhibition, SFA, not known, SFA, SFA. Sandys' picture is privately owned in Britain, other works untraced.

302. Exhibited, respectively, at the Winter Exhibition, New Society (Institute) of Painters in Watercolour, BI, Suffolk Street, Suffolk Street, not known, Dudley, SFA.

303. Athenaeum, May 3 1856, p.559; the work is not now known.

304. Exhibited at the Dudley, and at the RA.

305. Charretie's picture was at the French Exhibition, Joy's at the SFA; Sandys exhibited an "Enid" at the RA in 1868.

306. Anderson showed "Little Elaine" at the Grosvenor in 1879, but whether this is a diminutive treatment of Tennyson's character or not, is unclear. The Osborn and Montalba versions are not now known: the former was shown at the Winter Exhibition in 1864 and 1865, the latter in the same gallery in 1879. Carter's works were shown at the SFA, as were Butts' and Strong's, which by its explicitly narrative title suggests that the other treatments of the subject might well have been rather images than scenes, from the poem. Miles' piece was at Suffolk Street.

307. Art Journal, March 1 1868, p.46; the artists were Butts, Carter, and Myra Pointer.

308. Boyce's title is from "In Memoriam" xxxvii, line 5, but was a second title, the work originally being called "The Outcast".

309. "The Misses Taylor's 'Original Sketches' (234) are good, full of spirit and grace, lacking only delicacy of execution. These humble, domestic themes are far superior to the pretentious series of like productions from the 'Idylls of the King'" (Athenaeum, April 25 1863, p.560); "Miss Howitt's technical faults are conspicuous in this work... The picture, as a mere poetical sketch, might have pleased; but, as a completed work, it is a feeble interpretation of the ethereal poem - and is,

therefore, not worthy of Miss Howitt's genius" (ibid, March 17 1855, p.327 discussing "Sensitive Plant" at the NI (subject from Shelley's poem).)

310. Art Journal, May 1 1858, p.144.

311. Illustrated London News, May 2 1863, p.493.

312. Reitlinger, op. cit., p.89; in the Athenaeum's review of an exhibition of Bonheur's work at the German Gallery in 1860, there is even a suggestion that she had taken Scott for her inspiration (Athenaeum, June 2 1860, p.762). For a discussion of Scott's appeal as a refuge from modern day subject matter, see David Brown, Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination, London, 1979, p.205ff.

313. For instance, Justina Deffell's "Effie Deans" (1860, BI), Gillies' "Jeanie Deans' visit to Effie in Prison" (1852, OWS), Mrs. L. Goodman's "Rowena" (1859, Winter Exhibition).

314. The Builder, April 11 1863, p.258, reviewing the Suffolk Street exhibition. A woman artist's reluctance to take on an action-packed scene could have as much to do with deficiency in anatomy as it could to do with relative access to interior and exterior settings, or with experienced as against unfamiliar emotions: Justina Deffell's subject from Scott's "Waverley", of 1862, made a very domestic picture out of her theme, "Rose Bradwardine asking Edward Waverley to construe a difficult stanza in 'Tasso'", though the novel offers dramatic scenes. The paintings mentioned here are now untraced, except the Bowkett, which was sold from Sotheby's, October 14 1974.

315. Exhibited, respectively, at Suffolk Street, SFA, RA, BI, RA, Suffolk Street, Suffolk Street, Suffolk Street; whereabouts unknown.

316. Evangeline's included Solomon's at the BI in 1853, Adelaide Burgess' at the SFA in 1860, and Eliza Martin's at the same exhibition in 1864 (see above); Benham Hay's illustrations to Henry Vizetelly's "Evangeline" appeared in 1850, one of them being engraved in the Art Journal, July 1 p.214. Wordsworth-inspired works include Sophia Sinnett's 1857 "We are Seven" at the SFA, Eliza Turck's "Little Cottage Girl" at the same gallery in the same year, and Gillies' "The merry days when we were young" (1860) shown at the OWS.

317. Spectator, February 12 1853, p.159.

318. None of these works survives.

319. Howitt's much-praised work has disappeared, though Boyce's is in the Tate Gallery, with many preparatory notes for it in sketch-books owned by her descendants. Mrs Smith's piece, shown at the New Society (Institute) of Painters in Watercolour, Fox's shown at the BI, and Robbinson's shown at the RA, are not known.

320. This is Mme. Frédérique O'Connell, 1823/85, married to an Irish-man, who showed in Paris and London in this period. Baudelaire noticed her work in 1846 and 1859, at the Salon, thinking she was

English. She appears to have had no reputation to speak of, in this country.

321. Art Journal, March 1 1868, p.46, reviewing the SFA; Saturday Review, February 23 1867, p.236, reviewing the Dudley.

322. W. Vaughan, German Romanticism and English Art, New Haven and London, 1979, p.257ff; Starr's treatment appeared at the Winter Exhibition, Boyce's was left unfinished at her death (see below, chapter 6), Sandy's was shown at the RA, Johnson's was at the BI. Of these, only the Boyce is now known, in possession of the artist's descendants.

323. For example, Mme. Augusta Defeyl's "The Hebrew Mother" (Winter Exhibition, 1865/6), from Hemans; Alyce Thornycroft's "Apple Gathering" (Dudley, 1867) and "Laura and Lizzie" (SFA, 1869), from Rossetti; Ward quoted Strickland as her reference for "The Despair of Henrietta Maria" (RA, 1862), "Queen Mary quitting Stirling Castle" (RA, 1863), "The Tower, ay, the Tower" (RA, 1864), and "Scene from the Childhood of the old Pretender" (RA, 1869). Adelaide Procter's name was, also, an infrequent reference.

324. Eliot to Allingham, February 13 1877, quoted in Allingham, op. cit., p.178; the work in question was "Little Lillo" at the Dudley oil exhibition in 1871.

325. See Hugh Witemeyer, George Eliot and the Visual Arts, New Haven and London, 1979 and catalogue, George Eliot,centenary exhibition, British Museum, 1980/1.

326. For both artists, see catalogue, English Influences on Vincent van Gogh, Arts Council GB, 1974/5, and for Edwards, see N. John Hall, Trollope and his Illustrators, London, 1980.

327. See Houfe, op. cit., ch.2.

328. Athenaeum, May 18 1850, p.536 and Times, April 22 1850, p.5.

329. Illustrated London News, May 9 1857, p.445; Clayton implies that the artist's low rate of production was due to failing eyesight (op. cit., vol.2, p.125), which the Art Journal's obituary notice confirms: "Her sudden unexpected success affected her health and even her sight, so that for a time she was unable to continue her artistic career" (Art Journal, 1894, p.125).

330. Illustrated London News, November 10 1866, p.455.

331. S.L. Carr, "Verbal-Visual Relationships", Art History, vol.3, no.4, December 1980.

332. The Art Journal habitually gave first place to a genre it called "High Art: History sacred and secular", during the 1860's.

333. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.13.

334. Athenaeum, June 10 1871, p.726.

335. Times, June 5 1872, p.6.

336. See the well-known letters to the Times from Ruskin on the Pre-Raphaelite works at the 1851 Academy: "I had, indeed, something to urge respecting what I supposed to be the Romanizing

tendencies of the painters; but I have received a letter assuring me that I was wrong in attributing to them anything of the kind..." (Times, May 30, 1851, p.8). A case in point little connected with this issue in previous discussion, is Elizabeth Thompson, later Lady Butler, who was overtly religious in her private life, becoming a Catholic in 1873, yet whose religious works were all but ignored, in favour of her military pictures, until she was well established as an artist: a painting by her called "The Visitation" (fig.391), painted in 1872, was engraved in the Art Journal only in 1882 (Art Journal, 1882, p.280) - it is saturated with Mariolatry and employs the expressional mode of a Reni or Murillo rather than of a Fra Angelico or an Overbeck (see Butler, op. cit., p.99), rendering it unpalatable to the tastes of 1872; that she made other similar works, which have perhaps not come to light or have gone unrecognised in recent years, is suggested by a report in the Athenaeum in 1876, saying: "Miss Elizabeth Thompson, who has joined the Roman Catholic church, has, it is said, forsworn the painting of battle-pieces, and will henceforward devote herself to Sacred Art" (Athenaeum, July 15 1876, p.88).

337. Henry Vizetelli, Glances back over 70 years, London, 1893, p.352/3.

338. Athenaeum, May 25 1861, p.698 and Illustrated London News, July 27 1861, p.87; the Art Journal review called them "two pictures of a character peculiar to themselves, and still more peculiar when looked at as the labour of a lady artist" (Art Journal, June 1 1861, p.171).

339. Athenaeum, May 3 1862, p.598.

340. Times, May 13 1861, p.6.

341. ibid, May 8 1862, p.8.

342. Englishwoman's Review, August 8 1857, p.12.

343. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.69.

344. Athenaeum, May 1 1852, p.495.

345. See below, chapter 6, for more on Waterford's religious motivations.

346. Illustrated London News, November 28 1863, p.551.

347. Mrs. Steuart Erskine, "The Drawings of Lady Waterford", the Studio, 1910, p.283.

348. This memoir appeared as the introduction in the catalogue to "The Loan Exhibition of Water Colour Paintings by Louisa Marchioness of Waterford" at 8 Carlton House Terrace, April 1910 (this was the house of Countess Brownlow, the artist's niece); this is not the memoir written in 1892 by Charles Stuart, the artist's cousin.

349. See below, chapter 6, for more discussion of this point, and above, chapter 4.

350. She resorted more and more to portraiture, though other works mentioned in these pages by the artist include literary narratives; see Graves for a list of her Academy exhibits.

Already in 1871, the Illustrated London News critic wrote: "Miss Starr scarcely maintains the rich promise of last year in two small heads. Our first female gold medallist must not yet relax her efforts" (June 10 1871, p.578).

351. Athenaeum, May 16 1868, p.702.

352. Other gold medallists of the period (the gold medal was awarded bi-annually) were authors of works either literary or biblical in reference: Fred. Goodall, "Ulysees and the Nurse" (1869); F.G. Cotman, "Eucles" (1873); Claude Calthrop, "From the Book of Job" (1865); A.B. Donaldson, "Merchant of Venice" (1861).

353. For Siddal's drawings, see the catalogue to the exhibition "Ruskin and his Circle", Arts Council GB, 1964. Hagar's include Fanny Corbaux's of 1849 (New (Inst.)) and Mary Ann Cole's of 1858 (SFA); Ruth's include Caroline Smith's of 1853 (BI), Durant's of 1869 (RA), and Gillies' of 1846 (BI); Esther's include E.L.'s of 1863 (SFA). Wedderburn's work was exhibited at the SFA, Thoonycroft's unknown.

354. Whether this is Gertrude Jekyll, or not, is not certain: the artist is listed in the catalogue as Miss Jekyll, of a Henley address. The work was noticed in the Athenaeum review of the SFA (January 26 1867, p.125).

355. Further evidence of the topicality of the subject, in life and in art, can be seen in Jameson's "Sisters of Charity", first published in 1855 and again in 1859 (see above, ch.1 n.5 and in the Art Journal's engraving two paintings called "The Novice", both featuring nuns, in the latter 1860's (March 1865 and August 1867), which in both cases were works which had been exhibited in the previous decade (firstly, Elmore's "The Novice" exh. 1852, Art Journal March 1865, p.68; secondly, Horsley's "The Novice", exh. 1856, Art Journal, August 1867, p.184). For a further dimension of the subject, see Walter L. Arnstein, "The Great Victorian Convent Case", History Today, February 1980, p.46/50. The popularity of the subject also, of course, relates to the contemporary issue of Catholic/Protestant rivalry (see above, note 336).

356. Exhibited, respectively, at Suffolk Street, Suffolk Street, RA & SFA, Good Words (vol.56, 1864, p.840), Dudley (oils), SFA, Suffolk Street, RA.

357. Art Journal, March 1 1872, p.93.

358. See Charles Kingsley, "Henrietta Browne's Picture", Fine Arts Quarterly, 1863, p.301ff. The painting is now in the Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

359. ibid.

360. Saturday Review, June 16 1866, p.720.

361. The Chromolithograph, August 1 1868, vol.1, p.257; the Witt library contains another related work, "The Convent Dispensary" also.

362. Ward Lock's Elegant Arts for Ladies of 1856, declared in its chapter on Oil-Painting, "The historical, or grand style, which includes historical, classical, and Scriptual subjects... is the highest ranch, and few can hope to arrive at excellence in it, as it not only requires a thorough knowledge of anatomy, but a fertile and well-stored mind, and we must confess few, if any, ladies have succeeded in it" (p.92). The book goes on to recommend portraiture, landscape and, above all, genre painting, to its readers.

363. Osborne, Solomon, Mutrie, Benham Hay, and Ward herself were recurrent examples, along with Boyce/Wells until after her death. Mutrie is, of course, the exception.

364. S.C. Hall, Memories, London, 1871, p.480; Hall and his wife were friends of Ward and her husband (Henrietta Ward was one of the illustrators of Mrs. Hall's "Prince of the fair Family", published in December 1866), but this need not detract from the validity of the praise.

365. See Reynolds' Fourth Discourse, and Carlyle's Heroes & Hero-Worship 1841. The famous list of Preraphaelite heroes put Jesus Christ, the Author of Job and Shakespeare at its head, and among its fifty-seven names included only ten or a dozen names that could be called contemporary; most of the heroes were literary or painterly figures. (See W.H. Hunt, Preraphaelitism and the Preraphaelite Brotherhood, London, 1905, p.159.)
Roy Strong, in "And when did you last see your father?" (London, 1978) writes: "The Victorian vision of the British past evokes a glorious panorama within the mind: Boadicea rallying the Ancient British against the autocratic forces of Rome, valiant Anglo-Saxons repelling Danish invaders from the shores of Britain, King John signing the Great Charter, the foundation of our liberties, innocent child Princes murdered in the Tower, beautiful tragic queens making their way towards the scaffold, heroic Cavaliers on the battlefield, the Jacobites fighting for a lost cause..." (p.11)

366. Apart from Boyce and Osborn, the exhibition included Benham Hay, both Mutrie sisters, Solomon and Emily Macirone, although Ward was absent that year.

367. The catalogue did not give a reference for the quotation; the Art Journal's review gives a fuller historical gloss to the incident (Art Journal, June 1 1861, p.169). The picture was sold from Christie's, May 25 1979.

368. See below, chapter 6, for more detailed discussion of this and other of the artist's works. This picture is no longer extant.

369. Times, May 13 1861, p.6 and Athenaeum, May 11 1861, p.635. An interesting comparison would be with Richard Hannah's 1854 painting of the subject, "Lady Nithsdale petitioning..." shown at the RA.

370. Athenaeum, ibid.

371. Saturday Review, June 2 1860, p.709.

372. Exhibited, except the last (BI) at the National Institution. The political stands which subject choices indicate on artists' parts is beyond the scope of this survey, but presents fascinating contradictions: for instance, the depiction of both Cromwell and Royalist heroes in the same decade sets up very interesting questions about the extent to which painters meant to make political statements with their history painting, and the degree to which commentators and public could, or were prepared to, recognise the political significance of certain subjects and figures.

373. Respectively, Art Journal, May 1 1849, p.146; Athenaeum, March 31 1849, p.335; ibid, March 1 1845, p.226.

374. Resepctively, Art Journal, May 1 1852, p.140; Athenaeum, May 8 1852, p.521; Spectator, June 6 1857, p.593.

375. Art Journal, June 1 1860, p.168; the novel "Peg Woffington", by Charles Reade was published in 1853, after the play "Masks and Faces" by Reade and Tom Taylor, of 1852.

376. In fact, perhaps the 'vulgarity' of her works was meant to indicate their technical crudities as much as their lack of sprritual refinement. "Behind the Curtain", for instance, was described in 1858 as "a clever thought wrought out in unripe colours" (Athenaeum, May 8 1858, p.598) while "Harry Esmond's visit to Walcote" (1864) "would be a much better picture if it were more carefully painted" (ibid, May 21 1864, p.714).

377. ibid, May 12 1860, p.654.

378. ibid, May 25 1861, p.699; it is a definite case of the artist's works being not quite comme il faut, however, in more cases: "'Behind the Curtain' is... more confessedly vulgar than Mr. Carrick's (picture, "Weary Life") and certainly true in its way; we incline to find it the less distasteful of the two" (Spectator, May 29 1858, p.580); "With every disposition to be polite to a lady, we cannot help wishing that Miss Rebecca Solomon would either choose another class of subjects or cease to exhibit. 'Love's Labour Lost' is simply silly and unpleasant..." (Critic, November 26 1859, p.535); "'Reading for Pluck' and 'Reading for Honours': we do not like them; they are coarse and untrue..." (Athenaeum, May 21 1859, p.673). (These two latter pictures are in the Evelyn Waugh collection (now Auberon Waugh).

379. "Women Associates", Spectator, February 25 1865, p.208.

380. Art Journal, June 1 1869, p.184.

381. Times, May 24 1862, p.10; Saturday Review, May 24, p.593.

382. Art Journal, June 1 1869, p.184.

383. ibid.

384. Brown exhibited at the Dudley, as did Spartali, and other followers of Rossetti, such that the Times critic saw these exhibitions as the domain of a dubious school of art: "Miss Spartali probably is entitled to the prize for bad drawing (among affectors of the 'Archaic School'). Her 'Love Philtre'

exceeds in this particular everything here" (Times, February 15 1869, p.4); "In Miss Maria Spartali's large half-length, the "Romance of the Rose", while most of the characteristics of the school (Archaic School) are conspicuously present, there is a splendour of low sunlight in the face and bosom, and a pervading power of grave colour.." (ibid, February 14 1870, p.4); "Miss Spartali has never exhibited so powerful a drawing as her 'Antigone'... though it betrays the old weakness, the one unvarying Camelot face, with the long hatchet jaw, and the protruding chin, which the school borrowed from their master Rossetti..." (ibid, February 11 1871, p.4).

385. The former appeared in works by Baxter (1858, SFA), Howard (1858, SFA), Venables (1845, BI), Ward (1863, RA); the latter appeared in works by Ward (1868, RA), Grover (1842, BI), J. Joy (1841, BI). Strong has an interesting passage on the treatment and meaning of female historical figures such as these, especially Mary Queen of Scots (op. cit., p.133/4 and p.154); the versions of the subject which he discusses are, however, all by male artists.

386. Works like these were not necessarily greeted by critics as promotions of a type of figure or of certain values or modes of behaviour, and two important elements of this process were, on the one hand, the artist's ability to articulate her feelings about the heroine she portrayed, and, on the other, the critic's prejudices about women's ideals and aspirations. The Athenaeum review of Howitt's "Boadicea" is an interesting example of the working of these elements (since the work is now untraced, it is impossible to gauge to what degree either of the two elements succeeds in dominating): "Perhaps the most promising new picture we can pick out from the multitude of unnumbered and unnamed frames that litter the north wing of the Palace is Miss Howitt's 'Queen Boadicea". Miss Howitt's first picture of 'Gretchen', so beautifully elaborating the pathos of Goethe's peasant girl, we had occasion some time since to eulogize. We are sorry to say that this new work shows no great progress, for it is at once pretentious and affected. The face of the agonized and revengeful mother is only a variation of Gretchen's, and it is not a fresh idea nor is it a strongly individualized one. The subject is unhappy and does not suit Miss Howitt's genius... What is this but an angry woman, whose wrongs we only know by the Catalogue?" (Athenaeum, June 7 1856, p.718).

387. Strong, op. cit, p.11 and appendix.

388. Regardless of subject, Ward's historical pictures were often commented on from the point of view of originality or otherwise of theme; such an observation as the following, on "The Tower, ay the Tower" (1864) was not rare for her to re eive: "Mrs. E.M. Ward takes precedence of the female contributors for her more than usually well-painted, original, and very pathetic rendering of that hackneyed theme, the Children in the Tower" (Illustrated London News, May 7 1864, p.455). Her quoted inspiration was often Agnes Strickland, recounter of popular historical periods. The Builder's reviewer commented, while

discussing "Scene from the childhood of the old Pretender" at the RA in 1869, "Miss Strickland is fortunate in having so powerful and so graceful an illustrator as Mrs. Ward to point the interest of her anecdote..." (Builder, May 22 1869, p.397).

389. Nature and Art, May 1 1867, vol.2, p.157.

390. Respectively, Art Journal, June 1 1863, p.106; Athenaeum May 21 1859, p.683; ibid, May 17 1862, p.667; Saturday Review, May 24 1862, p.593.

391. Art Journal, June 1 1863, p.106.

392. The significance of such choices is, that in all these cases, the subjects' adolescent, if not adult, lives could equally well have provided incidents for paintings. (Even Chatterton lived until the age of seventeen.)

393. Descriptions of those works not illustrated here, will be found in the Royal Academy exhibition catalogues (see Graves, Academy exhibitors).

394. James Dafforne, "British Artists, their style and character" no.75, Art Journal, December 1 1864, p.358.

395. Whereabouts unknown; sold from Sotheby's May 20 1975.

396. Dafforne, op. cit., p.359.

397. The Chromolithograph, November 23 1867, vol.1, p.14.

398. Athenaeum, November 2 1867, p.569; the previous year's exhibition was in the same critic's words, "rather above the average in quality", its especial merit being F.M. Brown's "Coat of Many Colours" (Athenaeum, November 10 1866, p.612).

399. Sunday Times, quoted in the Englishwoman's Review, January 1868, p.397.

400. Illustrated London News, November 2 1867, p.478.

401. "Cimabue's Madonna being carried through the Streets of Florence", now in the Royal Collection; no such comparison seems to have been made in 1867.

402. "... much reliance is placed on conveying meaning through type and emblem. Indeed, fancy rather than deep sympathy seems to have been at play, bringing into prominence what should only appear as after-thoughts and apparently accidental details; to this, with an absorbing aim at colour, are attributable what one must regard as serious deficiencies in the representation, dramatically considered" (Illustrated London News, November 2 1867, p.478); "If Masaccio painted better than Mrs. Hay such figures as those of the elders who succeed the choristers in this procession, it was so much the better for him. It is noteworthy that exactly where the ambitious lady has followed these old worthies, she has failed most completely..." (Athenaeum, November 2 1867, p.579).

403. See Vizetelly, op. cit., the artist's subsequent gallery appearances were at the SFA (1870, 1871), the French (Winter) Exhibition (1870/1).

404. Spectator, April 3 1858, p.380; and eight years later, the Illustrated London News review of the SFA included the following comment: "...generally, the merit of the exhibited works is in inverse proportion to the elevation of the branch of art to which they belong. And precisely the same results would be presented if men had so few means of artistic education of a high order as women." (January 20 1866, p.71)

405. Spectator, May 29 1858, p.579.

406. Art Journal, May 1 1858, p.143 and Spectator, April 3 1858, p.380; "The Mother's Tale" was shown at Suffolk Street, "Hope in Death" at the SFA, "The Bride" and "The Lacemaker" at Suffolk Street. The work described here was shown both at Suffolk Street (1855) and the SFA (1858). Her "Sister of Mercy" at the RA in 1856, mentioned above, does not survive, either, but was described thus in the Athenaeum: "She is visiting the bedside of a poor woman, whose days seem numbered. The principal figure is a successful study" (Athenaeum, June 1 1856, p.164).

407. Letter of August 1854, quoted in Doughty and Wahl, op. cit., vol.1, p.214.

408. The study indicates that the finished painting probably anticipated very closely Fred Walker's later and more well-known treatment of the theme, "The Lost Path" (1863, priv. coll. UK).

409. Claxton's drawings were apparently "an amusing and didactic satire on the follies of emancipation as contrasted with the virtues of domestic life" (Fredeman in the Burlington Magazine, op. cit., p.524): this seems too simple a description of the artist's ambiguous political position, however. Fredeman gives no reference for his information about the publication, which is not in the British Library catalogue.

410. Exhibited, respectively, at Suffolk Street, SFA, SFA, Suffolk Street, RA, Suffolk Street, Suffolk Street, BI, mentioned by Clayton, SFA.

411. Jerichau's two paintings engraved in the Illustrated London News, March 19 1870, p.296 and the Graphic, September 16 1871, p.273; Bowkett's two paintings were, respectively, sold from Sotheby's, September 10 1974 and privately owned in this country (I am grateful to Christopher Wood and the owner for facilitating my seeing the work). See also "A day on the Beach", sold at Sotheby's, June 26 1976.

412. "With the exception of one or two specimens by foreign contributors, there is no picture which has successfully embodied any phase or incident of human passion or action" (Spectator, February 8 1862, reviewing the SFA).

413. Art Journal, March 1 1857, p.71.

414. The case of Gilles is particularly illuminating here, for she invariably worked on a small scale, and in later years exclusively in watercolour, yet it was frequently acknowledged by the Art Journal that the burden of her works approximated

to the epic: "Miss Gillies, at all times, aimed to make Art a minister to the loftier and nobler feelings of mankind; her associations have ever been such as were calculated to elevate not only her mind, but the minds of all who came within its influence. She has painted always well and with a high motive" (Art Journal, September 1 1857, p.296); "Miss Gillies' chief characteristics are breadth and power, and she always paints with a high motive, seeking to inspire for good all who come within her influence and endeavours to make art minister to the highest and best feelings of mankind" (Hays, op. cit., p.77); "When Miss Gillies condescends to subject-matter of this class ('Waiting for the Return of the Herring-Boats'), the nature is as true, as that high sentiment, which she usually paints, is penetrating" (Art Journal, December 1 1859, p.377); "Beyond" is the most successful essay she has yet produced in that quasi-classic kind of art, in which she seems to stand without a competitor" (ibid, June 1 1861, p.173). See the critics of the Athenaeum and the Critic, however, for less generous assessments of the intensity of her works' character, and see above, note 295, for the precarious balance between sentiment and sentimentality, the sublime and the ridiculous.

415. The Waterford drawings are in private collections, while the Boyle's are in the Call album, dated 1855, at the Victoria and Albert Museum; this small collection gives a good range of her work, incidentally, in terms of subject-matter.

416. On this point, with regard to marine painting, see the entry on Sophia Beale in D. Brook-Hart, Marine Painting, London, 1974, p.339. On the nude, Hamerton's already much-quoted essay provides an apt word:
"In order to paint the human figure truly, it is necessary to copy very carefully from nature vast numbers of men and women; and these models, as they are called, stand quite naked in the centre of a circle of students... What would be thought of a young lady who selected as her favourite recreation the minute and studious comparison of naked men? And yet, without such discipline as this, no young lady can ever hope to draw the figure" (op. cit., p.351 and p.354). Hosmer's "Sleeping Faun" (1860's) and "Puck" (1856), it will be remembered, were safely juvenile males.

417. ibid, p.357.

CHAPTER 6: CASE HISTORIES

Among the many female artists evidently active in the middle of the Victorian period, some have proved easier to study than others, for reasons which do not necessarily correspond to the stature, popularity or importance of the artists. For instance, Rebecca Solomon was prominent in her own time as one of the most conspicuous of the new breed of female artists attempting 'higher' art and exhibiting regularly at the Academy, and attached to an artistic family, yet surviving material relating to her work and her life has proved very scanty, and remaining works that are identified are very few. [1] Similarly, the Mutrie sisters Annie and Martha were highly esteemed in their own lifetimes, yet material that would illuminate their careers beyond the critical encomiums they consistently received and the evidence presented by the handful of identified works which survive, has not come to light. [2] Thus, those artists who were evidently considered the best female artists of the period under discussion here - Ward, Osborn, Carpenter, Mutrie, Solomon, Benham Hay, Boyce/Wells - are not necessarily those whom it is possible to document in detail. Though fame is a great preserver, it has not served these women thus. However, two of those 'best' female artists of the period will be examined in detail here: Ward and Boyce (Mrs. Wells).

To set beside those examples of contemporary success, it is instructive to place the 'good average' artist; she whom critics recognised but rarely rhapsodised, who consistently produced and sold, and who was like many other artists, and therefore representative of a type which characterises the period. Emma Brownlow will serve as the example of that type here.

In studying female artists, it is important, if the authentic range of artists is to be suggested, that the amateur - or, rather, the non-professional - artist is considered. Important, too, is the artist who does not become famous, for her art is probably more instructive as to the dominant modes and trends of the time in which she was operating than is the art of the 'great' artists who,

precisely because they are not typical of the period - because they are different and original - have become called great. Such an artist is especially important in the period under discussion here, because during the mid-century period the rise of popular patronage and the expansion of the exhibition field opened up the possibility of success to, seemingly, any artist, and a kind of artist became noted within the period who would not have achieved any recognition a few decades earlier; this is particularly applicable to women artists. Thus, two women who were not professional artists will be considered here: Louisa, Lady Waterford and Rosa Brett (Rosarius), the former achieving some renown and the latter none beyond her immediate circle, the former socially conspicuous and the latter quite unillumined, but both implicated in the most significant artistic movement of their day, Preraphaelitism.

The case histories of these five artists will provide a survey of the genres of the period: Ward a historical painter, Boyce a painter who could give grandeur to many genres, Brownlow a genre artist, Waterford an artist of the epic and religious, Brett a landscapist and nature painter, Ward and Waterford also painters of childish fancy pictures, and Brownlow making excursions into the continental genre and the romantic. In that painters, in oil and watercolour, were more numerous by far than female sculptors and artists in line, these case histories have been chosen as a representative range of the female artists of the period - working as they variously did in oils and watercolours, small and sketchy, larger and finished, Preraphaelite and not.[3]

A contemporary of the artists discussed here, William Frith, devoted a chapter of his autobiography to women artists.[4] The first of his female colleagues to be mentioned were the Mutrie sisters; he then went on to praise Thompson, Henrietta Rae, the Montalba sisters, Alice Havers, Bonheur, Allingham, Coleman (Angell), Starr, Kate Dickens (Perugini), Ward, Laura Alma-Tadema, Margaret Dicksee, Mary Gow, Mrs. Seymour Lucas (Marie Cornelissen), Anna Lea Merritt, Osborn, Jopling and Miss Dealy. Some twenty years

earlier, Ottley in his Biographical Dictionary had thought Bartholomew, Carpenter, Martha and Annie Mutrie, worthy of mention; while in 1874, Sarah Tytler (Henrietta Keddie), in her more modest volume Modern Painters & their Paintings, found room for Boyce, Ward, Carpenter, Jemima Blackburn/Wedderburn, the Mutrie sisters and Amelia Paton/Hill. [5] At the end of the century, Ernest Chesneau, in his account of The English School of Painting, described an all-male scene, with the exceptions of Thompson and Greenaway. [6] Such a fluctuation of reputation as these examples represent, is, of course, not restricted to female artists; but their fame is based on precarious ground in the first place - determined by how well they fulfill certain conditions, which are not of their imposing [7] - and is thus more subject to the vagaries of fashion than is that of their male colleagues - a point which is relevant to the cases of those artists mentioned in glowing terms within this account - Howitt, Benham Hay, Bodichon, Osborn - whose reputations now are negligible or non-existent, and whose careers cannot appear here as case histories due to the paucity or inaccessibility of remaining material, despite their success in their own time. The five case histories that will follow here, then, must represent many others, as well as themselves, though they are also independently interesting and important within the period.

Henrietta (Mrs.E.M.) Ward

Henrietta Ward, as the most freely-praised female artist of the mid-century period and yet the one most often related to her inevitably more successful male relations, demonstrates resoundingly the immense hindrance to the achievement of an independent reputation which sharing the name and pedigree of other artists presented to the mid-Victorian woman, although that circumstance might have its advantages too: not only during her lifetime was her relationship, firstly to the James Ward family, and secondly to Edward Mathew Ward, hung around her neck like a millstone, but when she died in 1923, an obituary notice in Connoisseur spoke

firstly of her male relations, and in the relevant edition of Who was Who, she is identified not as a painter or an artist, but as her father's daughter, her grandfather's granddaughter, her uncle's niece and her great-uncle's great-neice.[8] A more constructive observation of the relations she bore to the art world, was made by Sarah Tytler in Modern Painters and their Paintings, in 1874: in connection with Ward, the author commented:

> "I may observe, in proof of the difficulty which the technicalities of art must present to women, that of all the women painters whom I have chronicled, I am not aware of one, unless it be Suor Plautilla, or Mrs. Wells, with whose antecedents I am only partially acquainted, who did not overcome the difficulty, by the advantage of an early familiarity with art, from having been the daughter of a painter, or, at least, of an engraver." [9]

As the most successful female painter of her day, Ward stands for the progress that was made by women artists in mid-Victorian times, but at the same time the very nature of her success displays the limitations of that progress.

Henrietta Ward was born in 1832, the only child (a son having died in infancy some time before) of George and Mary Ward. Her father, George Raphael Ward, was an established painter and engraver; her mother, Mary, though an invalid, was a miniature painter of considerable accomplishment; while George's own father was the painter James Ward, whose connections brought the painters George Morland and John Jackson also into the family circle.[10] Growing up in such a family, she naturally came into contact with many people for whom art was not only a livlihood but also a first love, and it is not surprising that she was encouraged to develop the interest in painting which she already showed when young. Her grandfather James, whose favourite she was, "watched over my budding intelligence, fortified and directed me towards an artistic goal... I could draw and paint before I could read."[11] The favourable aspects of such surroundings for an aspirant artist were

made much of by later commentaries on Ward's career: the Art Journal's James Dafforne wrote in 1864:

> "Talent, or genius, is very far, as a rule, from being hereditary; yet,it would be strange indeed if it were not sometimes found descending from one generation to another when the individual is surrounded, even from the cradle, by everything that would be able to develop, if not create, it. Such was the case with the lady whose name appears at the head of this notice. She is granddaughter of James Ward, RA, whose brother was William Ward, an eminent engraver, and whose sister married Morland, and whose daughter was the wife of J. Jackson, RA. Moreover, Henrietta Ward is daughter of Mr. George Raphael Ward, the well-known mezzotinto engraver, and at one time a miniature painter, and a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy... It would therefore have been singular had she not shown powerful evidence of the influences which have on all sides surrounded her whole existence. Art was her inheritance, and amidst it she has 'lived, and moved, and had her being." 12

She seems to have been a spoiled and precocious child, spending most of her time in adult company brought to the house by the family's cultural connections: the artist herself describes the situation on the second page of her autobiography, the main source of information for this account:

> "As I lay in my cradle, a great many 'giants' of art and literature bent over me, gave me their benediction, and professed an admiration, even if they did not feel it, for the little child about whom my parents were already building castles in the air. Later, these same men and women of genius were my devoted playmates." 13

Landseer, Leslie, Tom Moore, and the Chalon brothers were among the Wards' regular visitors at their home in Fitzroy Square, an area which boasted a large proportion of well-known names among its residents at that time. Henrietta seems to have been

alarmingly capable of meeting the demands of such a life:

> "My environment must have been totally different from that of any child I have known; my friends were all grown up, yet I never wanted children as companions. On the few occasions that I attended children's parties, their games and dances did not interest. I felt too superior to dance with them; frankly, they bored me." 14

Her father regularly took her to Academy occasions and meetings of the Chalcographic Society, as well as insisting on her accompanying him on any social call or business errand, so one can well imagine that her manner and conversation and her awareness of the workings of the art-world were mature even by the 'little adult' standards of Victorian childhood.

Despite the tendency of such an upbringing to exaggerate a child's gifts, Henrietta possessed genuine artistic talent (in the field of music as well as in painting), [15] and she had a drawing accepted at the Academy in 1846 - when she was 14. This was a large black and white drawing called "Elizabeth Woodville parting from the Duke of York", now in the possession of the artist's descendants; this shows the mother and son seated in a medieval interior, capably but not outstandingly rendered. [16] The 1849 exhibition had a piece by her, [17] and she had her first oil accepted there in 1850, "Results of an Antwerp Marketing", a theme which she treated in various forms ("Antwerp Market", RA 1852). She says that her mother taught her drawing originally, and her father and grandfather encouraged her in art, but once she met the young artist Edward Matthew Ward, in 1843, it seems that he became her main preceptor. When they met, he was 27 and she 11.

> "Finding that I was interested in Art, Edward Ward became my critic, my drawings were shown, and he gave me many valuable casts to help in my studies. He taught me much that was helpful in drawing... I worked very hard, beginning each day at six in the morning, every hour being mapped out till the afternoon, when

> Edward would arrive to criticise my work and set me fresh tasks... Nothing that was meretricious or showy in art could ever deceive him; he saw to the heart of things, and he used to say that the source of all design was in Nature, and a knowledge of it was to be obtained only through earnest study of Nature." 18

It is important to consider the extent of E.M. Ward's influence on her at this impressionable stage of her career, since later on, as an independent artist, she was often said by critics to produce work very like his. [19] At this time, she would no doubt have become very strongly impressed with his own style and method, not only because he became her principal instructor in art, but also because she sat to him for several of his own paintings, including "Temptation" (1843), "The South Sea Bubble" (1847), "Doctor Johnson's Audience with Lord Chesterfield" (1845) and "The Fall of Clarendon" (1846), whose creation she therefore observed. That the young woman conceived a strong affection for the older artist, which resulted ultimately in their marriage, must be seen as a powerful factor in the degree of credibility and authority which he had in her eyes at this time; Germaine Greer discusses interestingly the effect that love has on the formulation (and performance) of women artists (although she fails to consider the example of Henrietta Ward, for whom her generalisations are, however, valid.) [20]

Her vocation established, Henrietta Ward was set up in her own studio in a room in the family house, and she was enrolled at Sass's for some training more formal than the advice and criticism which she received in the family circle. It is quite probable that this latter move was decided on at the urging of Edward Matthew Ward, whom Henrietta credits at tiresome, but for her time typical, length with helping her to maintain her serious attitude to art: "By example he set me a high standard which I, who loved him dearly, ever strove to reach." [21] Henrietta and Edward became engaged in 1847, the intention being to marry after two years, when Henrietta would be 16; the parents' misgivings at the proposed

match, however, frustrated the couple's passion enough to drive them to a secret marriage in May 1848, with the connivance of Edward's friend Wilkie Collins.[22] It was not until the August that the pair let out their secret, when they left their respective homes on honeymoon, and the estrangement to which this period of familial conflict gave rise, continued more or less until the deaths of all the parents. Once these domestic stresses were settled, or at least abated, Henrietta settled down to enjoy building a career. She later wrote, of this period in her life:

> "The joy of following a profession entirely to one's own satisfaction is a privilege known only to a few. Art never bores, but offers always fresh vistas of delight and fascination. My husband was a rising man, broad-minded enough to take pleasure in the fact that I too was an artist. I worked on my own lines, but found him always the kindest teacher, the most unfailing friend I have ever known." 23

However, the conventional - at that time, almost inevitable - demands of a married woman's situation soon made themselves felt - 'babies, that truly feminine impediment'[24] - and she had her first child in 1850, followed by a second the next year, eventually bearing six more.[25] She wrote in her autobiography, on reflection:

> "In my young days most people would have agreed... that a wife and mother had no right to be a practitioner in paint, and I think in most households it would have been rendered impossible by the husband's and relations' combined antagonism to the idea... My work required great concentration, and orders were strictly enforced that I was not to be disturbed during certain hours of the day... But there were exceptions; I was occasionally confronted by an alarmed servant coming to tell me of a domestic tragedy, some knotty point that could only be solved by the mistress of the house." 26

One is reminded of Charlotte Brontë writing her novels inbetween the domestic tasks of the kitchen. Throughout her career, however,

she put to professional use the resources which her domestic circumstances did offer, frequently using her children and the home setting as subjects for her pictures (e.g. "God Save the Queen!", 1857, fig. 294, "The Morning Lesson" 1855, "The Bath", 1858, "Flora, a nursery sketch" 1858). [27] Her record of exhibited works in her first years of married life is a very varied one, ranging from the historical mode which her early Academy drawing had adumbrated, through the literary and the domestic, including some portraiture on the way. From the first, she received critical attention, usually favourable in the first decade of her exhibiting career. In 1851, the Academy saw "The pet Hawk" and "Rowena" ("a very graceful work") [28]; in 1852, "Antwerp Market", which was bought by the Preston collector Bashall. [29] Critical commentary on her work quickly adopted the stance that it was to retain until changing ideas rendered it unacceptable, that she was 'very good for a woman.' As the fifties proceeded and then gave way to the sixties, skilled and confident works by women became more and more frequent, so the hitherto exceptional standard of Ward's work was less harped upon, but certainly in the mid-fifties it was, generally, with impressed surprise that her anecdotal historical scenes and domestic vignettes were alike greeted: "Mrs. E.M. Ward in her very charming study, "The May Queen", has painted with an almost masculine vigour", wrote the Athenaeum critic on the RA in 1856 (fig. 17). Her previous year's exhibit at the Academy brought similar responses: it was the "Morning Lesson", which the Art Journal described as a work "of great merit - sound and forcible to a degree we very rarely find in the labour of a lady's hand". While the year before that, her "Scene from the Camp at Chobham" was praised thus in the Art Journal: "as the work of a lady it exhibits great intellectual power. It is full of Art-knowledge of a matured order." [30]

The Athenaeum critic raised the other point of criticism which was to remain consistent for the artist's works, that of her relation to her teacher and husband:

> "A stout highlander is teaching his child the use of the musket; while the mother who is watching in the background, watches him with a smile of interest. The rude fittings-up of the camp make a picturesque background and the details and faces are painted with a masculine firmness. The arrangement of colour, the red and black, and the tone of flesh, remind us of Mr. Ward; and it is natural that the pupil of such a master would catch something of his mannerism and of his somewhat French colour. The affected sternness of the father's discipline, and the gravity of the soldier's child are exceedingly well given." 31

The technical skill by which these early works impressed can be attributed in part to the fact that the artist kept up her basic education at this time, continuing at Sass's and having the resolution to attend the RA Schools' lectures for students, although women were unwelcome [32]; according to a later account, the instruction she sought in these years was primarily in the figure, an element on which, of course, many women's works fell down. [33]

Ward's singularity was that she was a female historical painter; but this area of subject matter only gradually emerged as a speciality. The 1850's established her as a domestic painter, with some excursions into the literary ("Rowena" 1851, from Scott's Ivanhoe, and "The May Queen" 1856, fig. 17 , from Tennyson's poem) and, towards the end of the decade, a move towards a more substantial type of theme: in 1858, the Athenaeum reported, "Mrs. Ward, so rumour has it, makes an ambitious advance this year:- leaving the scene of domestic drama for the historical field. Her subject is said to be "Howard's Farewell"... a good subject in good hands." [34] Such ambition - backed up in practical terms by exhibition, not only at the Academy, but also at the SFA, and in the provinces - was approved even by critics who feared 'masculinity' in women's works, and she went from strength to strength, gravitating towards a favourite subject area which could best be described as historical genre. Without seeing all the

works which she produced in this period of greatest success (1855/70), one can tell her increasing confidence and popularity from the continuing compliments of the never easily-won art press. "Howard's Farewell to England" (1858) was greeted thus by the Art Journal's critic:

> "... the most important work we have seen from the hands of this lady... it surpasses the productions of many of her masculine and even highly reputed contemporaries... in conception, arrangement, and execution, it leaves nothing to be desired." 35

In reviewing the Winter Exhibition in 1862, the Art Journal's critic concluded that "This accomplished lady undoubtedly ranks among the best artists of our time." [36] In its review of 'The London Art Season' of 1864, Blackwood's Magazine wrote:

> "Calderon, Crowe, Yeames, Pettie, Storey, Hayllar and Mrs. Ward, have one and all enriched the Academy with works which deserve explicit commendation. Mrs. Ward's 'Princes in the Tower' is a picture of tender pathos, painted with rare skill and care, and admirable for an even moderation, which bespeaks calm strength and balanced judgment." 37

The same year, the artist's status was reflected in being selected as the subject of no.77 in the Art Journal's series "British Artists, their style and character", articles published monthly in the magazine with two or three illustrations of the artist's work and on average two pages of biographical and critical commentary. The writer James Dafforne, concluded thus:

> "Mrs. Ward is still young, both in years and practice; we may therefore expect her future life to produce even richer fruit than any yet seen from her hands: we see no reason why she should not attain the highest position in historical painting." 38

The favour with which this particular journal regarded Ward can be confirmed by the memoirs of its long-standing editor, Samuel Carter Hall, where he describes the artist as "the accomplished lady whose works take rank with those of any painter of either sex which the age has produced." [39]

In other quarters, there was some pressure on the artist to devote more attention to the less challenging, domestic works which she frequently showed, and (the implication being) to leave to her husband the historical dramas in which he, unarguably, was skilled. [40] Her historical scenes, however, nearly always have some domestic content, or a familial context, though at the same time they stretched her powers of composition and expression very visibly more than did her homely subjects. The complexity of such scenes as "Palissy the Potter" (1868, fig. 75) at Leicester, or "Queen Mary quitting Stirling Castle" (1863, fig. 18), or "Lady Jane Grey" (Sion House) (1866, fig. 15), or "George 3 and his family at Windsor" (1872, fig. 400) at Liverpool, contrasts satisfyingly with the compositional simplicity and uncomplicated frontality of "The first step" (1860, fig. 64). [41] Whether with a domestic scene or a historical, Ward brought an imaginative interest in accessory, and sub-division of space, and natural figural relationships, into most of her works. One finds these qualities in equal measure in, say, "Elizabeth Fry visiting Newgate" (1876) (fig. 99) and "God save the Queen!" (1857, fig. 294) although the former remains a more interesting and consequential work because it challenges the artist's lived experience and demands more in terms of imagination and range of figural type and lighting effect. [42]

The popular pressure to devote herself to 'suitable' subjects should perhaps be illustrated in so many words, although it has been evaluated already. The Athenaeum considered the "Morning Lesson" thus in 1855: "Though not perhaps equal to her picture of last year, in power, is superior to it - and to all her former works - in the delicacy of its sentiment." [43] The same paper

welcomed her 1862 "The despair of Henrietta Maria" with "We trust Henrietta Ward will not abandon the painting of children. Who else will make the beauty of our little ones immortal?" [44] This same picture was appreciated thus by the Saturday Review:

> "Mrs. E.M. Ward enters this year upon the domain of her husband, and produces a theatrically historical picture, "Scene at the Louvre in 1649." This picture purports to represent the 'despair' of Henrietta Maria on learning the fate that has befallen her husband at Whitehall. Can this demonaic countenance be taken for <u>despair</u>, or even as representing the beautiful queen of Charles I under the most unfavourable circumstances? Subjects of this kind are at best uninteresting, and least of all fitted for a lady's pencil... Surely it is better for a lady to paint the simple beauty of children, than to invest a beautiful Queen, when struck down by woe, with so extravagant an expression." 45

Interestingly, even Clayton, writing in 1876, when all the artist's major historical paintings had already been brought before the public, seems to emphasise the domestic scenes over the historical:

> "Mrs. Ward is especially happy in her delineations of modern English domestic life. Her charming young matrons, her lovely babies and children - surely tempting enough to make the most amiable of gourmets ready to second Dean Swift's memorable proposition - her graceful interiors, her delicate presentments of home luxury and peace, are familiar to us all. Her historical scenes, chiefly drawn from what has been called the <u>domestic</u> side of history, are likewise too well known to require more than a passing note. These scenes are invariably painted with knowledge of the subject, full consideration, and a firm hand." 46

The artist did not totally dispel the prejudice that she should be better occupied with domestic subjects, by continuing to exhibit

such pictures all the while her principal exhibits took on historical themes, and apparently executing them as successfully, in technical terms, as she did the grander type of work. Some critical comment retained for a long time the shadow of the notion that the former should be her preferred subjects: "This year, as last, Mrs. Ward has ventured on historical ground", wrote the Times critic in 1863, some five years after her first positively historical work had been shown at the Academy; "Mrs. E.M. Ward has chosen a theme well suited to her talents", wrote the Art Journal critic of "The Fortunes of Little Fritz" (1871), in which the principal historical personage is but four years old and is shown in a domestic interior.[47]

The artist's command of her medium can be but partially verified from remaining located works since they are so few, but it is interesting to set their evidence against the observations made in the 1860's and '70's by critics, whose main theme was always that the picture in hand was the best that they had ever seen from the artist - although that did not prevent them making comments on the defects she displayed in the work in question. Her recurring merits, technically, were not unanimously agreed upon, but her overall skill was often confirmed: thus, "In power of conception, arrangement of colour, and vigour of execution, this work may fairly claim recognition amongst the best efforts of modern Art" ("Episode in the life of Mary Queen of Scots", 1863, fig. 18); "The picture is a thoroughly genuine work, easy in style and bright in colour" ("God save the Queen!", 1857, fig. 294).[48] Her colour and her handling were most debated: "These (pictures), if somewhat heavily handled, show much feeling for colour that ought to be refined and made brilliant" ("Two of my Pets" and "The Toy Basket", 1862); "Mrs. Ward's colouring is not factitiously brilliant; in truth, it is rather opaque and heavy; but it has been carefully arranged not to make a show of craft" ("Palissy the Potter", 1866, fig. 75); "The execution has force as well as delicacy, the colour brilliancy; the realism of accessories could scarcely be more complete" ("Sion House", 1868, fig. 15); "Morning Lesson" is crude and

glaring at first sight, and in inspection wants refinement; yet the painting talent in it is very considerable" ("Morning Lesson", 1855); "excellent in drawing and colour, and the whole treatment of the subject shows both dramatic feeling and great technical skill... in parts, there is a certain garishness of colour and abuse of highlights" ("Sion House", 1868, fig. 15). [49] The diversity of critical opinion does not, however, obscure her evident feeling for composition and, closely-related, for clarity of narrative, perhaps more crucial features in her chosen genre than either colouring or handling. "Chatterton" (1873, fig. 295), one of the few works from her heyday which survives, supports praise for her compositional abilities, while confirming that her drawing can be defective, while her touch is delicate yet not tentative, and the expressions of her characters interesting and true. "Palissy" (1866, fig. 75) shows a tendency to melodramatic exaggeration in pose and a heavy use of colour, while affirming the frequent praise for her eye for accessory, also to be noted in "Chatterton".

An element of Ward's artistic activity which contributed greatly to her prestige, in her time, was its connection with the Royal family. She had many portrait commissions of Royalty to her name, (fig. 410) and taught various royal children, privately and later at her school in Lowndes Square (fig. 98). [50] The Wards' connection with Victoria began in 1854, when Edward received a commission for the new Palace of Westminster. (E.M. Ward was responsible for "The last sleep of Argyll", "Wishart at his Execution", "William and Mary", "Alice Lisle", "The monk declaring...", "The Acquittal of the seven bishops", "The escape of Charles II".)

The Royal couple, keen to invest this major event of public patronage with their personal support, made frequent visits to the Ward home and studio in Upton Park, Slough (as they did to the workplaces of other artists involved in the scheme) to demonstrate their interest in the progress of the fresco designs. An enduring relationship arose out of these beginnings, and Henrietta recorded in her autobiography that the Royal pair "often looked in on us as we worked... The Queen was clever at drawing and showed me most of

her work." [51] One wonders how the two women suited each other; though no feminist, the artist had signed the 1859 memorial to the Council of the Royal Academy petitioning for entry for women to the Schools, and in recalling her attendance at the students' lectures in the early '50's later wrote:

> "Personally, I feel that the RA-ship should be open to women equally with men, for there is no sex in Art, and it is pure selfishness that has excluded women from this honour, with the exception of Mary Moser and Angelika Kauffmann." [52]

But the professional discrimination she suffered on account of her sex, though it was recognised during her career on many an occasion by different quarters of the press, [53] does not seem to have outweighed her essential conservatism, which must have endeared her to Victoria. It is notable that her heroines were not women of her own day, and the modern woman she did depict were shown in traditionally feminine roles: nurse, mother, wife; although they are often shown executing those functions unsupported by men, it is apparent from their comfortable surroundings that they, like the artist herself for most of her life, had adequate male support in a conventionally respectable way. [54] On her husband's death she received a Civil List pension 'in recognition of his Services to Art': though this may have been a way of approving her work, also, it remained the only form of public recognition that women could receive for their relationship to art. [55]

The death of the artist's husband in 1879, followed by that of her father in 1880, left her in her late forties with eight children to support, the eldest of whom was 30 but the youngest of whom was still a liability. Her reputation was established but, as far as patronage went, she was not the connoisseur's darling that, among women, Rosa Bonheur had proved to be. [56] She resolved the financial uncertainty of her situation by opening a school 'for the art education of young ladies', in Lowndes Square. She later claimed

in her autobiography that there was no other similar establishment in London at the time of its inception; the great demand which apparently greeted it is, therefore, quite understandable.

> "When I used to arrive in the morning from Windsor, I was soon accustomed to finding the hall full of parents and guardians, wishing to place their daughters under my charge. I was obliged to refuse many applicants, as well as offers of partnership im the shhool." 57

The artist herself recorded that her patrons were the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Princess Louise, and the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, while her visiting tutors included Alma-Tadema, Briton Rivière, Horsley, Marcus Stone, Frank Dicksee, Fildes, Frith, Millais, Hook, and Calderon - a list of names which guaranteed to recommend themselves widely, being a mixed bag indeed By 1887, an article in "The Lady" indicates that Henrietta Ward's school was an established feature - "her well-known and successful art classes", writes the author, [58] and a few months later in the same periodical, a review of an exhibition of the student's work hints at the sort of work which was done there:

> "All the principal branches of Art were represented, from careful studies from the cast to portraits far beyond the usual point of excellence attained by the ordinary amateur, oil and watercolour painting from still life, and sketches from Nature." 59

Tessa McKenzie's "The Art Schools of London" of 1895, described the artist's school in the following terms:

> "Although professional pupils study with Mrs. Ward, her Classes appeal most particularly to ladies who wish to have the moderate talent which they possess trained so as to be a source of interest and amusement to them, and not a means of earning a livlihood. Situated in

> Belgravia, the studio is chiefly patronised (sic) by the daughters of people in the higher ranks of society, and to encourage steadfastness of purpose in the youthful amateur mind is the chief aim in Mrs. Ward's artistic instruction." 60

In the original press accounts of her school, however, such exclusiveness was not implied: "Parents whose daughters are anxious to pursue Art either as a profession or an accomplishment will be exceedingly fortunate in obtaining the aid thus brought within their reach", reported the Art Journal in 1879. [61]

By this time, Ward's art was old-fashioned, and it is tempting to attribute her decreasing rate of exhibition in the 1880's, not only to increasing age and to the school demanding much of her energy, but also to an awareness that the latter decades of the nineteenth century demanded a different style and other themes than were the staple of her art. Her connection with the SFA, by now the Society of Lady Artists, continued until 1886, and her contributions to the Academy, though less and less frequent, continued until the year of her death. [62] History pictures became a thing of the past, and the artist turned to landscape and domesti scenes not necessarily animated (fig. 411). Her duaghters, Eva and Flora, followed in their mother's footsteps, appearing at the Academy from 1872 and 1873, respectively, while the artist's son, Leslie, became well-known in another branch of art as the cartoonist, 'Spy'. In 1911 the artist has published her Reminiscences and the year after her death, another autobiography, Memories of Ninety Years, was published, and Ward was, indeed, 91 when she died in 1923 (fig. 412).

enrietta Ward, like many more prominent Victorians, lived beyond her time. In the words of the obituary notice published in the Connoisseur, 1924:

> "The death of Mrs. Edward Matthew Ward, which took place in July last, removes an interesting

and noteworthy figure from the world of art. An artist herself, and coming of a family who for nearly a hundred year fifty years have always included distinguished artists among their members, she formed a link with long bygone generations of painters who had transmitted to her aesthetic traditions now forgotten." 63

It is more instructive for the purposes of this study, however, to remember that in her heyday, a judgment on her artistic significance was more likely to read like this:

> "Without wishing to ignore the merits of any of the female artists of England - and there are many possessing talents worthy of all recognition - it must be admitted that Mrs. E.M. Ward stands at the head of the list." 64

Joanna Mary Boyce (Mrs. H.T. Wells)

Rather like Turner and Girtin, Ward's position as the foremost of British female artists in her day would have been almost certainly overturned if Joanna Mary Boyce had lived longer than she did. A review of the former artist's "Mary Queen of Scots" (1863), said, in part: "This fine work, firmly painted and drawn, and telling its tale with much clearness, seems to promise that the painter will supply the loss which we sustained lately in Mrs. Wells." 65 Boyce (who became Wells in 1857) died in 1861 after childbirth; the Critic's obituary notice supports the suggestion that she was extraordinary:

> "Seldom have the tidings of the premature loss of a gifted artist had so painful a significance for us, as those which abruptly struck our ear the other day, of the unexpected death on Monday the 15th inst. in her 30th year of Mrs. H.T. Wells. In her, English art has lost more than it knows - unquestionably one whose works give intimation of qualities rare in any artist and in this case fated never to be developed in full..." 66

Behind the rhetoric endemic to obituary notices lies a dimension of compliment unusual for women artists of this period, and typical of the critical esteem in which Joanna Mary Boyce was held. The Athenaeum responded to her death from post-natal illness at the age of 30, in similar vein:

> "Almost every visitor to the current Exhibition of the Royal Academy will share our regret to learn of the death of Mrs. Wells, who was known as the most promising of our female artists. An artist she was, in the best sense of the term, gifted with a rare power of execution and knowledge of practical Art such as we feel safe in saying has not been possessed by any English lady. Beyond this her works evinced feelings for design which were superior to the average gifts of many painters of higher note..." 67

She had been born in 1831, the third of five children, the eldest of whom was George Price Boyce, who became a watercolour landscapist of the Preraphaelite circle. Though the family was resident in London, (her father carried on the business of wine merchant in the city, until 1842 when he changed his occupation to that of pawnbroker), she spent her schooldays in Ramsgate and other places, and evinced an interest in as well as an aptitude for art at an early age - at the age of 12 she was already copying with the encouragement of her brother, who, after toying with the idea of adopting the profession of architect, decided in 1849 to become a landscape painter. [68] Like many women of this period who eventually chose art as their major activity, the girl seems to have been equally given to music, but her energies were evidently firmly channelled towards painting and drawing by the time she had reached her late teens, for the artist's descendants have sketchbooks dated by her Summer 1843, 1844 and 1845, showing sketches made at the seaside, in the country, of figures, cottages, etc., and in 1849 she entered Cary's; while on holiday that year, other members of the family recalled, "every day George and Joanna went out sketching." [69] George was by this time 'in' with a certain artistic set, through being a student at the Royal Academy schools, and - though this involvement eventually drew the brother away from

the sister - at this point in Joanna's development was very useful to her; but her closeness to George at this period led, as well as (for instance) to William Frith and his brother visiting the house to see Joanna's and George's sketches, also to Joanna giving up her studies completely in June 1850 to nurse George through an illness from which he was not fully recovered until the November. 7

After this, however, she returned to Cary's and at the beginning of 1852 started at Leigh's. During this period she was in the company of other artists - a letter of May 1851 describes a soirée at the Edward Matthew Ward's where the guests included C.R. Leslie, William Frith, Richard Ansdell, Augustus Egg, Charles Landseer, and Frank Stone - and attending lectures with her father, making portrait studies, sketching wherever she went - a crayon and chalk skyline study is inscribed "Edgbaston august 51 JMB" - and constructing an aesthetic which, to judge from her diary and sketchbook scribblings, was based to some degree on Ruskinian and Preraphaelite thought (Turner, she wrote in her notebook on 19th December 1851, was "England's greatest artist" and her father took her and her brother to Turner's funeral on the 30th of that month.)

Joanna Mary Boyce was very apparently, from her notebooks, an earnest and diligent student of her art, understanding the profession of painter to be one which required a whole person with an active mind and lively thoughts. Her sketchbooks of the early '50's are teeming, not so much with drawings as with quotations, literary food for thought, notes of the books she is reading and the lectures she has attended. All these jottings tend to a serious and responsible attitude to life and art jointly. For instance:

> "It is nothing in what ratio we get on comparative with another so that we work honestly, constantly painfully ourselves this if we do we shall never be behind. Keeping in mind we must work as to God, and not as to men and improve to the utmost the talent given the loins girt and the lamp burning" (sketchbook, October 4 1851/November 1852);

"Know what you have to do and do it.
Turner vide Ruskin"
"Books to read... life of Robert Wall, Fichte,
Stilling (?), Pascal's letters, Sartor
Resartus, Lavengro, Shelley, Hood's poems,
Herbert's Poems"
"Genius is in truth nothing but a strong
desire of knowledge and the spirit of
industry is its truest mark."

Such intellectualism is a mark of the 'modern woman' which, in her striving for a sense of independent self and in her reluctance to marry, the artist later shows herself again to be; this is particularly evident in her exchanges with Henry Tamworth Wells, who wished to marry her. [71]

Her sense of herself as a woman artist is evidenced by other notes in her sketchbooks at this time, when she was beginning her twenties: in 1852 her recommended reading to herself includes Women of France, Women of Christianity, Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli, [72] while she transcribes a piece from a life of Charlotte Corday thus:

> "Fidelity to its own impulses is the test of
> a noble nature - She seemed to feel instinct-
> ively that great thoughts are always better
> nursed in the heart's solitude, that they
> can only lose their native depth and
> intensity by being revealed too freely
> before the indifferent gaze of the world",

and an unattributed note, probably written in 1852, reads: "He saw for woman as for man, no other limits than those which the intellectual powers of the individual prescribed."

She was bringing a similar intensity to her technical studies at this period, too: she attended Leigh's, from 2 February 1852 at least three times a week, and was toying with Henry Well's idea that she should go to Paris to study (as he had done). Her sketchbooks, again, give evidence of the thoroughness of her approach:

"Seldom or never paint highlights on to transparent colour... in painting a portrait, make a careful drawing or outline on the canvas by this means you learn the faces and become familiar with form and expression... In first sketch of chalk drawing (?) put in light and shade in white and stump freely and decidedly (?) put frills round throats a little lower than in nature. a man's head is generally 9" long. measure your sitter from the inner corner of the eye to chin."

"The best way I have tried as yet of painting the hands and indeed all flesh is to model them in venetian red and white only - when dry glaze gently with rose madder and raw sienna and work into it and get the shadows as true as possible not bright in colour and when dry work in where wanted delicate opaque grey when dry finish with touches of opaque and transparent colour as required..."

The sources of some of these strictures are given, some are personal experiences - she included many detailed notes from a lecture series she attended on the human form by John Marshall, probably in 1852. Her art education took a particular step forward, however, when she went to Paris in April 1852 with her father, staying from early April until mid-May; Wells "advised me where to go in Paris" and she records an admiration for Scheffer and Delaroche. Though to a modern observer, such preferences seem somewhat arrière-garde, Scheffer's influence was to come through in "Elgiva" (1855, fig.396) to no harmful effect, and Delaroche's impact was to give way to that of Couture (in "La Veneziana", 1861, fig. 14) and to the influence of older-establish examples such as the Venetian masters. It must be noted, though, that to admire Delaroche and Scheffer was not out of the way, in 1852: Mrs. Grote's biography of Scheffer, published three years after the artist's death (1860) is symptomatic of the esteem in which he was held by some quarters of modern opinion.[73] Boyce, however, did not choose to study under either Delaroche or Scheffer when she later went to study in Paris, though she apparently kept her good opinion of them at least until 1855, when

she described them as "two names in the highest walk of French art." [74] On the home front, at this time, she certainly admired Millais, a respect which can perhaps be seen reflected in the artist's first eventual Academy exhibit, "Elgiva", since this uncommon subject was one which Millais treated in 1847. [75]

Joanna Boyce's father died in September 1853, an event that checked her industrious and enthusiastic progress for a while; although she was taken out of town (to Torquay) to distract her from the sorrow she felt at the loss of such an encouraging parent and supporter to her ambition, in November her diary records: "I began painting my sketch - unsatisfactory - idle - Have a sense of something wanting to give me energy - the dear encouraging eyes of my darling father, to whom alone I was sure of giving pleasure." Still, she produced work, though on a small scale: there are some tiny children's heads in oil from this period, including the "Little red-haired Boy" otherwise known as the "Babbacombe Boy" still in the possession of the artist's family (fig.316). At the beginning of 1854 she commenced what was to be her first success, a head of Lizzie Ridley, sister of Joanna's brother Matthias' fiancée, in the guise of "Elgiva" (fig.396). She began with a chalk drawing on February 1st, and by March recorded that both George and Wells were pressing her to send the work when finished to the Academy exhibition, though she was reluctant to do so so soon after her father's death. At this time, the tendency to earnest application and self-discipline that has been noted already as a feature of her memoranda to herself, came in useful and shows itself again in her notebooks:

> "A passionate desire and an unwearied will can perform impossibilities or what seem such to the cold and feeble If we do but go on some unseen path will open among the hills. We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged by the apparent disproportion between the result of simple efforts and the magnitude of the obstacles to be encountered. Nothing good and great is to be obtained without courage and industry."

- this passage from Sharp's essays is to be found in a notebook dating from 1854. In line with such sentiments, she enlisted at the School of Design in April 1854 and made fitful weekly attendances, working in her own painting room at home the while, though her mother's opposition to her painting was a great worry to her.

Perhaps through her attendance at the School as well as through the artistic connections of George with the Preraphaelite circle, [76] the artist was at this time in contact with several other young women aspiring to be artists. Her notebooks mention Bertha Farwell and Jane Todhunter [77]: there is a pencil sketch of a woman at an easel inscribed "Miss Todhunter, spring 54", while in the summer of 1854 she went sketching with Farwell. She was reading Anna Mary Howitt's "An Art-Student in Munich", though she thought little of this artist's work at the Portland Gallery that spring, describing it in her diary as "not at all marvellous." Even so, in October and November of that year, Boyce records visits to the Howitts', with and without the Farwell girls, while there is talk of her going to Dusseldorf or Munich (presumably to study), which must have been an idea derived from Howitt's experience. Also, a notebook from this period contains a sketch of the frontispiece to Henry Vizetelly's Evangeline of 1850, by Jane Benham, who was a great friend of Howitt, having been with her in Munich.

Boyce's artistic efforts of 1854 came to fruition, when her "Elgiva" was accepted at the Academy in 1855, and was greeted very favourably. Ruskin noticed the painting in the supplement to his Academy Notes - this indicates that someone (an interested party, perhaps) had pointed the work out to him as worthy of note - and especially eulogised its expression and handling, saying:

> "if this artist, looking always to Nature and her own thoughts for the thing to be expressed, will strive to express them, with some memory of the great Venetians in her treatment of each separate hue, it seems to me that she might entertain the hope of taking place in the very first rank of painters." 79

The Illustrated London News, in response, noted that Ruskin "has discovered a promising genius in Miss Joanna Mary Boyce." [80] Ford Madox Brown referred to the work as "the best head in the rooms" [81] and the Athenaeum, recalling it six years later, opined: "'Elgiva', a head, is remembered by every artist who saw it". [82] Despite the encomiums, however, the picture was still in the family long after the artist's death, appearing in the sale of George's possessions in 1897. [83]

As well as this success, 1855 marked the beginning of an issue which was to continue unresolved for some time: this was the question of marriage to Henry Wells, who had been pressing her to commit herself to him for some time. She was very reluctant, using words like 'slavery' and 'dependence' and 'degraded' in her letters of demur to him. She agreed, however, to become engaged, on the understanding that this state should last two or three years. She was not at all equivocal, however, about the change in her fortunes brought about in the latter part of the year, when, in September, she and her mother and brother Bob went to Paris.

In October Mrs. Boyce returned home, and Joanna was left to study. She contemplated asking Rosa Bonheur to take her on as a pupil, but ended by enrolling at Thomas Couture's atelier, where the most striking aspect of her studies was the life class. [84] She writes home (not to her mother, from whom she was anxious to keep knowledge of the precise nature of the studies she was pursuing) that although she had felt anxious and reluctant about it at first, she was now sure that any girl could study from the nude model as though it were a bunch of flowers or a landscape, and come to no harm! The sketches from the nude in the notebooks which survive include male and female models, but include studies very evidently from the statue or cast, as well as some from the life.
From the evidence of the notebooks, she worked a lot in chalk and charcoal, but she also painted, for while in Paris she completed a portrait head of Mms. Hereau, the landlady at the pension where she stayed, and she began a large oil of "Rowena offering the Wassail cup to Voltigern" (fig. 397), which was, in George's words,

"painted from a handsome Polish girl at Paris", [85] and which was rejected at the Academy in 1856, though its confident handling and daring composition gave it much character. This work seems to have either disappeared or been destroyed, and is known only from a photograph which is dated August 1857. To what extent the stay in Paris influenced her art - other than simply bringing it to a higher level of accomplishment - is a tantalising question. Her early "Elgiva" looks to have been influenced by Scheffer, whose works she could have seen on her first trip to Paris with her father, when she reported an enthusiasm for that artist's work, and whose studio she visited again when she was in Paris in 1855; while the later "Veneziana" (fig. 14) bears relation to Couture's "Patrician"; and the general impression she relates in her letters of the modern French shhool was that she thought its pictures were better than English counterparts. [86] She especially noted Delacroix as a fine colourist, although she regretted his extravagant treatment of subject. But her opinions are more precisely conveyed by the pieces which she wrote for the Saturday Review, solicited by the establishing figure of that journal, Jones, who was a friend of the Boyces. Her two columns, "Remarks on some of the French Pictures at the late Paris Exposition", appeared in December 1855, followed by a review of the Academy show in five instalments in May 1856. [87] She picks out on the French scene Cogniet, Rousseau, H. Vernet, Meissonier, Delacroix, Ricard and a few others. Her enthusiasm for the French painters, however, is somewhat modified in her Academy criticism, where she makes a case for what amounts to the Englishness of English art, praising especially the painters of Preraphaelitism:

> "The pre-Raphaelite movement has done some good, and will do more; and the extravagances that its leaders fell into in some of their first pictures, such as Millais's "Carpenter's Shop", were but the necessary results of a great change... they have taught us by their pictures, aided by Ruskin's words, that an artist's strength lies in a child-like sincerity, and in the shunning of pride, which is always allied to servility. If Frost and Pickersgill, and two or three other

> young men who were talked of as 'rising artists' some years ago, had learnt the lesson, we should not find them sinking deeper and deeper into the slough into which indolence and pride have led them... The ridicule and the narrow-minded criticisms that have abounded in the press against the pre-Raphaelites and their champion have fallen harmless - so far, at least, as the principles for which they have fought are concerned. The great men in the group have walked calmly onward, heedless of the strife of trivial tongues, and the walls of the Academy during these last few years have been but the theatre of their triumph." 88

The, indeed, Ruskinian alliance which she makes between artistic and moral excellence characterises the whole review, as she commences thus:

> "Six picture exhibitions are now open in London, containing all that our artists have been able to accomplish for 1856. Have they worked that we may be mentally and morally the better for their labours, or merely that our purses may be lighter, and our rooms furnished with pleasing pictures? Money, we know, with artists as with other men (sic), is unavoidably, and not always prejudicially, a main incentive to sustained exertion; but let us hope that a simple love of nature and art, an earnest striving after excellence, and, with some at least, impatience to give forcible utterance to the multitude of thoughts within, have had their place too." 89

Her espousal of Preraphaelite values - of industrious seeking after the visual truth, of authentic though it might be unusual colour, of a certain favoured physical type thought to express spiritual as well as physical beauty - comes through in most of her works, more and less combined with an awareness of the Renaissance inheritance which she derived equally from Ruskin and from her time in Paris. The precision of "Elgiva", the earthy but vivid colouring of "The Heathergatherer" (1861, fig.282), the minute

handling of "Sidney" (1859, fig.256) and the red-haired boys (1850's, fig.316) [90], testify as much as the angularity of a nativity drawing in Her sketchbook with its Siddal-like madonna, (fig.395) and the vivid colouring of "Do I like Butter?" (1861, fig.342) and the "Bird of God" (1861, fig.317), to a Preraphaeli sensibility which yet retains an individual appearance, which might explain why critics did not specifically ally her to the movement. Her preference for one or two models of distinctive appearance, red-haired and in some treatments not unlike Elizabeth Siddal in facial terms, is another Preraphaelitism: she used Charlotte and Lizzie Ridley, and Lizzie Turnbull, over and over, (figs.317,381);even her little boys from the Welsh trip have red hair! At the same time, it is significant that the female figures in her work always appear strongly individual if they are adult: the Heathergatherer, the Venetian Woman, the mother in "The Child's Crusade" (1860, fig.66), Rowena, the unfinished "Sybil" (fig. 398) and "Elgiva" establish the dominant psychological note of the work by their faces and forms. In this way, Preraphaelitism could not capture her, with its male-defined females, iconic or decorative, woven into the overall visual pattern of the picture. The artist planned a number of works which were unexecuted at her death, which suggest a Preraphaelite result: it is tantalising to speculate on what she would have made of "Autumn, from Keats", "King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid", "Lady of the Castle", Charlotte Ridley as "Catherine Sforza", which were listed by her as works to do in the near future. [91] Indeed, the unfinished "Sybil", "Gretchen" (fig.378) and "Undine" (fig.381), suggest that Boyce's style would have continued to take strength from Preraphaelite tenets while remaining different from it, somewhat more robust - in a French-derived way - than its works habitually were, and it is not insignificant that of the PRB's, it was Rossetti who specifically praised her work, though his departure from Pre-raphaelitism was in a very different direction. [92]

Critics picked out her industry, vividness and force without attributing it, in fact, to Preraphaelitism or to any other modern trend: some made parallels with Venetian old masters. "No joy

the blowing season brings" (1858, fig.315) was described by the Times critic as "a picture which, for power and gloomy impressiveness, seems to us to excel everything else here... It is, indeed, almost the only work in the room which rouses the mind to questioning"; [93] "The Heathergatherer" (1859) was, to the Critic reviewer, "earnestly and vigorously painted"; [94] "Peep-bo!" (1861, fig.279), wrote the Illustrated London News reviewer, "a work full of nature and feeling." [95] She did not exhibit those works which might most nearly have been seen as Preraphaelite: "Sidney" (fig.256), "Shanklin" (fig.218), or the Babbacombe or red-haired boys (fig.316), and critics would not know the industry which went into each work - there are countless preparatory sketches and studies for "Peep-bo!" (fig.413), and for the central figure in "Gretchen" (fig.379) - or the detailed landscape studies she made or the cloud-scapes which still remain in the artist's family. Thus, her resounding talent was, singularly for a female artist, unrelated to any Svengali or hero or éminence grise, and allowed to redound to her own credit. [96]

In May 1857, after spending a period in Brighton nursing the ever-failing George, she started out for Italy with other friends, including Henry Wells, and one result of this tour was her marriage to him in Rome in the last month of that year. She learnt Italian for the trip, and seems to have spent all hours of the day and night sketching and studying and painting, for her notebooks are full of studies of peasants working and in characteristic costume, of fellow travellers (e.g. a nun on the train from Nîmes to Arles on June 4), of sketches inscribed Blois, Bordeaux, Pau, Biarritz, Lourdes (in May), which gave way to Spanish locations in June, which in turn become Italian locations in July, August and September; while there are numerous portrait sketches, both anonymous and identified ("Marietta Ferotti sept.13 57") including a small oil of Margaret Piotti, a friend with whom she stayed in Rome, the "Laughing Boy" inscribed 'Alfrinolo Todi, september '57', "Carminello", inscribed 'Rome, March '58. 3½ hours sketch', and the small oil of a peasant

child now known in the artist's family as "Vanessa" (fig.328). The stay in Italy included visits to Florence, Rome and Naples. While in Rome, she began "The Child's Crusade" (fig. 66), which was not finished until 1860, but the most outstanding result of her Italian trip was "La Veneziana" (fig. 14), which appeared in the RA show of 1861 (along with "Peep-bo!)and "The Heathergatherer") Although the Athenaeum's obituary referred to "The Child's Crusade" as "her most important work known to the public", [97] it was "La Veneziana" which attracted more attention than any other of her works.

The Saturday Review wrote:

> "Mrs. H.T. Wells vindicates her claim to be one of our best female painters by her striking "Veneziana". Here we have a marked female profile, sharply projected, like a Bellini, against a green background. The Venetian beauty has golden, not to say yellow, hair, and a vengeful expression which it is not pleasant to contemplate. But there is unusual force in the execution." 98

It was this force, and the expression, which gave rise to much comment: the Athenaeum's critic wrote as follows about the picture:

> "Mrs. H.T. Wells has a fine and characteristically sinister-looking study of a head, styled "The Veneziana", a profile of a lady with small reptile-like eyes and tawny-coloured hair, rank and harsh; a cruel, square jaw and heavy, pitiless face" 99

and the obituary notice which came only a few months later in the same pages, declared: "As a young and consequently incompletely practised artist, Mrs. Wells' works erred rather in excess of strength than the common fault of feminine tameness. Her "La Veneziana', also now at the Academy, is an example of this." [100] This says much, of course, about the common expectations of what women's art might be; the Critic's obituarist trod the same ground,

in saying: "To unbounded enthusiasm for art, to masculine and vigorous powers of mind were united in Mrs. Wells an unmistakably feminine character." [101] Rather, her work strongly yet simply reflects her character, as that is evidenced by her own writings and by the opinions of her associates; Elisabeth Siddal wrote to D.G. Rossetti, on hearing of Joanna Boyce's death:

> "It is indeed a dreadful thing about poor Mrs. Wells. All people who are at all happy or useful seem to be taken away. It will be a fearful blow to her husband for she must have been the head of the firm and most useful to him." 102

While Ruskin wrote to his father at the same time: "She was nearly a perfect creature in intellect and purpose..." [103]

Although the excess of emotion to which premature and unexpected death gives rise must be treated with some reservation as a guide to real assessment of character and achievement, it is obvious from Boyce's work that she was already, at 30, a confident and gifted artist with enough facility and strength of purpose to take her much farther than she had thus far gone. She was referred to as the, or one of the, most gifted female painters of her time in Britain, not only at the time of her death, but afterwards, too:

> "Miss Boyce was, in fact, much more of a 'painter' than most of the Preraphaelites, her work being remarkable for warm, deep colouring and a true feeling for pigment... (These are) paintings which excite interest in a talent in many respects ahead of its own time." 104

What struck contemporary judges most was her power, but to a later eye her variety is also impressive. From "Elgiva" and "Rowena" and the unfinished "Sybil" it is a way to "Sidney", "Peep-bo!" and "Do I like Butter?", and between them lies not a gap, but rather the lovely "Bird of God" and the sensitive "Heathergatherer" (figs.396,

317, 342, 282, and 398) and each as accomplished in its own way as any of the others. Although most valedictories put her high in the ranks of the women painters of the time, it is interesting to note that the Critic's obituarist had the temerity and conviction to write, quite simply, without any sense at all of special gender-related pleading: "Her untimely death is a real loss to the English school." [105]

Emma Brownlow (King)

It was from Boyce's and Ward's generation that most of the women who became recognised as artists of note during the mid-century came: those women, who, being born around 1830, came into their twenties at the opening of the period and gained reputations on the shoulders of which the next generation could rise to equal standing: Osborn, Blunden, Solomon, Mary Severn, were all born between 1829 and 1834. Equally, from this generation came the women, who, though they did not become stars, swelled the tide of female artists which, as has been established, changed the ebb and flow of mid-Victorian art. Thus, Emma Brownlow was born in 1832, the third of three daughters. Her father, John Brownlow, was secretary to the Foundling Hospital in Coram Fields, St. Pancras, and this institution dominated the family's life, although Emma's career eventually led her as far afield as Europe and Australia. Despite this unusual experience, she is a type of the preponderance of female artists in her time: consistent and ambitious over and above her genre, producing work by which she meant to earn money, over a long period, while functioning also as a wife, mother and daughter.

She drew and painted from a very early age, though there is no evidence that art was in the family. There is no evidence of her receiving any training in art, and her juvenile sketches show a late maturing technically, although the themes which occupied her

teenage pencil are interestingly adult.[106] A pencil drawing of 1848 depicts "A 'Special' taking leave of his Family" (fig. 414), the separate expressions of distress in each member of the family well-observed though childishly rendered. A scene dated 1849, titled "The Lecture" (fig. 415), shows a skeletal speaker boring his apparently proletarian audience to sleep and flirtation, again with well-observed distinctions between the different characters, but crude and caricatural depictions. Brownlow's taste for social comment, strongly evident from these early pieces, regrettably did not persist until the time when her technical powers had become such as would do such subjects pictorial justice. Another drawing, from May 1849, inscribed "The drawing room and the Street" (fig. 416), used the popular two-part comparison between the haves and the have-nots, making its point through the contrast between the hedonistic upper-classes and the oppressed poor. Very effectively - though whether by accident or design, at such a young age, is debateable - the upper-class scene pushes the destitutes' space to the right, compressing the paupers' picture-space into a strip narrower than it is high, while the space occupied by high society is broader than it is high, giving an effect of constriction on the one hand and of unrestricted expansion on the other. The use of shade on the side of the oppressed and light on the oppressors' side is also very telling, as is the fact that exchange is limited on the right-hand side to the landlord and the pauper group, while among the left-hand side crowd there is a multiplicity of exchanges taking place. Another drawing, "The fashion of the Day" (1850, fig. 417), echoes this latter scene, showing the upper bourgeoisie at leisure, and tending to make fools of themselves, though their foolishness is silly rather than wicked. A more mature sketch is "Vaccination by the Parish", dated May 1853 (fig. 418), which with its informal and naturalistic composition and potential for expressive variety, could have made a satisfying oil painting, though it seems not to have been worked up.

Doubtless the Hospital environment encouraged a social conscience

in the young woman; to judge from the variety of gesture and expression in these early drawings, many were observed from actual experience, but they were still fanciful as pictures. Brownlow's first exhibited picture, however, was based firmly on her lived experience: "The Foundling Girl" appeared at the Academy in 1852, and was the first of a number of works which arose from the artist's relation with the Hospital. It is only in these works that her interest in socially critical subjects endures: in 1853, a work called "The Orphan" at the BI may have been a Hospital-based picture; in 1858, "The Child restored to its Mother" (fig. 310) at the Academy was a Hospital subject; while the 1860's saw "The Christening" (fig. 312), "The Sick-Room" (fig. 311) and "Taking Leave" (fig. 313) as well as a more anecdotal piece, "The Orphan Friends", which was followed in 1877 by "A Foundling girl at Christmas Dinner" (fig. 314). [107]

Once begun, Brownlow's exhibiting career continued steadily over three decades (she appears to have last exhibited in 1877, at the Society of Lady Artists (SFA as was)), including in its scope not only the main London shows but also provincial exhibitions. From showing two or three pictures a year in the 1850's, she graduated to a period in the mid-sixties when she might exhibit a dozen pieces at various shows in one season, in London, the Midlands and the north of England. [108] However, her production remained unevenly received in critical terms throughout her career, and, indeed, the materials in the possession of her descendants show that the ideas she had for pictures were many and varied; it was not always the most arresting or stimulating that she chose to work up into exhibition paintings. She exhibited almost exclusively in oil, but her preparatory work was carried out in pencil and watercolour, and she continued to sketch in pencil and charcoal for her own purposes. How many of her sketches and plans for paintings were never worked up is uncertain, since many of her exhibited titles remain unidentified, and some works were lost between Britain and Australia, leaving no record of what they were, while some paintings are still in various hands in New Zealand, and are as yet unidentified. [109] Some drawings from the

1850's, though, were certainly made into exhibited works, and some contain ideas which surfaced in slightly different form as oil paintings. These include an interior with a poor, fatherless family, dated September 1853, related to "Cottage Interior" of 1853 (fig. 291); a drawing showing a nun at her prayers, dated March 1856 (fig. 419); a drawing in what would nowadays be described as 'scraperboard' of a young woman in a kerchief with a basket under her arm, dated July 1856 (fig. 420), which is related to many of the artist's later Continental women workers and peasants; a slight drawing of a Breton-looking young woman in prayer, inscribed 'Evangeline' (fig. 421), and dated October 1857; a charming drawing of a girls' schoolroom, dated September 1858 (fig. 422), which is curiously anticipated by the 1856 and 1857 exhibits, "Village School near Portel France" (RA) and "A village school near Boulogne" (SFA); a cottage interior with an old woman sitting in the inglenook, dated 1859, and a similar scene with a young mother and child, dated April 1859 (fig. 423) typical of the artist's most frequent settings (as in "Baby's first Shoes" (fig. 292), "The Firstborn" (1865/6) and several unidentified scenes.) These drawings accurately suggest what the range of her exhibited subject-matter was to be: that is to say, what has been called here comestic genre and Continental genre, verging on the fancy picture on occasions.

Domestic scenes such as she exhibited during the 1850's ("Hush don't wake the Baby" 1853, "Granny's Lesson 1856, "Helping Granny" 1857, "Our little Brother" 1858, "A Peep at the new Baby" 1859) [110] were common enough subjects for a female painter, though Brownlow did not have the domestic experience of such scenes - neither she nor her sisters were married at this point in time [111] - and was as doggedly middle-class as such paintings are plebean. Brownlow managed gratifyingly often, however, to steer clear both of the voyeurism that such subjects often betrayed in the hands of the middle-class painter and the sentimentalism that made them attractive to the middle-class audience. She made interesting variations, too, on these motifs, though such works were not necessarily critically satisfactory: "The Conscript's Departure"

(1865, fig. 424), for instance, was described in the Art Journal as "a subject beyond the artist's reach", while "Between the Acts" (1866) was criticised in descriptive terms. [112]

The strand of Continental genre winds its way through Brownlow's work almost from the start ("La Fille du poissonnier", 1854, SBA) and until the end ("Dejeune" 1873, SBA and "Les Orphelins", 1873, SLA), and its long duration can be explained not simply by fashion but also by the fact that the artist travelled abroad both in the 1850's and 1860's, certainly in the latter case expressly for artistic purposes. There is no documentation on a journey in the 1850's, but the artist's descendants possess watercolour landscapes dated April and June 1850, and inscribed 'Switzerland',

while there are others which, though undated and unidentified, look Continental rather than British and are couched in similar style. Though such cursory notes make the veracity of the dates and locations rather suspect, Brownlow would have been only 18 years old in 1850, and already inclined to figure subjects rather than landscape, so that such sketches as these lakeside and lane views could have been a young lady's idle sketches, rather than an aspiring artist's raw material. The dominance of the Continental note in her exhibited pictures of the 1850's makes a European trip in this decade almost inevitable, and given that, later on, the artist included Swiss locations in her exhibited work ("Lobgesang at Berne" 1861, "The Fountain, Berne, 1862), [113] it seems wise to conclude that she did make an early trip to the Continent, which took her as far east as Switzerland, via France and perhaps Belgium. It is quite certain that she made a trip in 1863, to Brittany, to which can be ascribed the inspiration for many later works. This will be returned to.

By the early 1860's, she had attracted some regular critical attention, though its tenor was uneven. The Art Journal's critic had picked out "Helping Granny" and "Village School near Boulogne" in the SFA's first year, as works which "will attract attention from their truthfulness of character, manifested in subjects of an

opposite nature to each other." [114] One of her Academy exhibits, "Granny's Lesson", in 1856, was greeted by one critic as "equal to some of the best genre works in the exhibition"; [115] the Builder's critic called her, in 1858, "a young artist of promise." [116] By 1869, though, a cautionary note sounded in the notices she received: "Let the artist beware of reproducing the colour and manner of another painter: she is quite strong enough to work on independently" [117] (tantalisingly, the Art Journal critic did not vouchsafe who this 'other painter' might be); the work in question was "Sunday Morning", shown at Manchester - from the latter 1850's, she sent works to Liverpool (1857, etc.), Birmingham (1858, etc.) and Manchester, while during the sixties she sent work to at least those three and Sheffield, Worcester and Glasgow. In 1861, a handful of critical comments illustrate both the negative and positive aspects of her technical development: "A Prayer for the absent one" at Suffolk Street was, according to the Art Journal, "so firmly painted as to be even masculine in manner", while the Athenaeum thought "Lobgesang at Berne" (fig. 425) at the Winter Exhibition, "heavy and coarse in handling, and vulgar in one or two points of design", although it "has real merits of a high class, in portrayal of character, grouping and expression." [118] The "Lobgesang at Berne" is a good example of how the artist had progressed from her early sketches: the scene is very crowded, calling for skill in grouping and variety in characterisation such as she had shown in her young drawings, and a sketch for this painting shows that the finished picture elaborated upon the original scene with its basic incidents. This work provides an interesting reflection on her early combination of interesting ideas with technical shortcomings, for it borrows the format of her juvenile composition "The lecture" (fig. 415), and successfully gives it more body and more life. The complexity of the groups and relationships is challenging, with the crowd divided into three and the separate incidents within those groups distractingly readable, but it is characteristic of the artist that she tries for the maximum, rather than making the most of the

minimum; given the lack of ambition that female artists were often accused of, this cannot be seen as entirely regrettable, and,in 1866, in response to another of her more substantial works, "Between the Acts", the Illustrated London News critic wrote: "It is impossible not to commend the intelligence Miss Emma Brownlow has shown in several occasions in her conceptions, notwithstanding that her powers of expression lag too far behind her ambition." [119]

Such was Brownlow's standing as an exhibitor in the London galleries when, in 1863, she set out on what she herself called a "courageous search for the picturesque." [120] The authenticity of costume and setting which such works as hers demanded could become stale when taken from books and dolls and other paintings, and it was not unusual for British artists to journey abroad for sights, sounds and souvenirs which would animate their pictures. [121] Brownlow's need was for correct costume and gesture and facial type, rather than for the right location, since she rarely set her figures outdoors and tended to restrict her picture space to closed interiors; her works from the fifties and early sixties were not regularly challenged on their authenticity, but she evidently felt she must go to her source. Since there are no extant figure drawings from the supposed first trip abroad, it seems reasonable that she would by now feel the need for that sort of material. She does not mention, in her account of this journey in 1863, any previous trip, nor does she compare any experiences on this journey to previous similar ones, but she has people in Paris to meet and chaperone her, who might well be previous acquaintances.

Brownlow and her sister Elizabeth left London on June 6, and returned two months later (August 4). Nothing is known of the circumstances which permitted the trip (i.e. whence came the money for it, and whether that was conditionally acquired), but it is evident from the artist's diary of the journey that their finances were very nicely calculated. Brownlow's diary, in fact, records minute aspects of the time away, and it will be quoted from copiously here, since it provides an insight, not only into her character, and her ways of working, but into a British artist 'doing'

Brittany. A couple called Perret were the sisters' hosts in Paris, where they did the sights before venturing into the provinces. The Exposition, as Brownlow calls the Salon, featured that year the Salon des Refusés as well as the regular show: Brownlow was no less conservative than some others of her contemporaries in her appraisal of the state of French art at the time:

> "Saw an immense number of pictures, good, bad, and indifferent, also a great number of those which had been rejected by the jury, almost without exception to my mind with justice, including one (the only one that I saw by an English artist) by Whistler - it was more like a piece of bad whitewashing th than anything else." 122

They left the capital for Rennes, safeguarded as ladies had to be: "Mrs. Perret went with us to the railway and put us in charge of a very agreeable English lady - also going to Rennes"; thence to the port of L'Orient, "where we were met by the waiter of the Hotel de France with a letter from Mrs. Maubert giving us full directions for our further journey." Their destination was Le Launay, a small community where they were to stay and from which they ventured out to additional locations. Even en route (the journey lasted 6 days) Brownlow began the job she had come to do:

> "On arriving at Plouay we stopped to water the horse and refresh ourselves at a picturesque little inn - in a most quaint village. I sat down outside the inn to make a little sketch of passing figures and was very soon perfectly surrounded by all the boys and girls and many of the adults of the village, who crowded round me too closely to be pleasant to my olfactory nerves - notwithstanding the energetic efforts of an old man to keep them at a respectful distance, and who tried to fix one or two in a regular soldier position for me to draw them more easily."

In this day's expenses she lists, for the first time, outlay on 'wardrobe': 2 fr. 50c. for a local costume cap. Such items

recurred in plenty in the following weeks: on June 17 she paid 103 fr. for a Langonnet dress and cap; on July 1 1 fr. 80c. for a cap at Gourin; on July 8 15 fr. and 13 fr. respectively for a man's and a woman's dress, the former Gourin, the latter Langonnet; on July 15, she bought a 'costume of Quimper' for 12 fr. 50c.; she bought belts, collars, aprons, caps and dresses. The evident use she made of these purchases is that after her return, her works include much more particularised costume than before. The sources of her purchases were varied:

> "Mme. Phillipe took us to the house of a very rich farmer, whose daughter, a girl of sixteen with clear olive complexion and large soft ox eyes, showed us all her grand fête dresses and even dressed herself completely in the most gorgeous and walked out in the sun that we might the better see the beauty of her attire. I then purchased one of her old dresses complete, for which I gave 100 fr. - just £4. I also bought one of her every-day caps for 3 fr." (25 June)

> "After dinner we went in search of a Quimper costume. A child whom we got a man to ask refused to sell hers so the man sent his servant with us to show us where they are made after some trouble we secured two jacket affairs and one second-hand, for which I had to give 12 fr. and also half a franc to the servant who took us there. Could not hear of any place where the cap and collar are to be had. Must try and buy one of the Bonnes, and make up my mind, as I always do, to be fleeced." (15 July).

It is very evident that the "search for the picturesque" was a demanding affair: the two women attended popular events wherever they went, visiting the prosaic and the extraordinary, Brownlow always reporting most diligently what the people did and did not wear, and whether or not they were "quaint" or "picturesque" (her terms of approbation.) Thus:

> "Drove to Gourin to see the fair - lots of cattle and people but a decided want of colour in the dresses - the Gourin people wearing sort of brown holland coloured

coats and those from other villages wearing blue..." (June 15)

"Sunday. Cloudy but fine. Drove in dog-cart to Gourin and were just a few minutes too late to see the people come out of church, but saw a very great number of them in their Sunday dresses, standing about outside the church and in the streets, shops, etc. Some of the dresses were pretty, the Langonette, in particular" (June 21)

"Sunday. Up at about five and off in dog-cart before eight to the Pardon at St. Barbe, one of the grandest Pardons in Brittany. The road in parts perfectly horrible and very trying to the springs. We reached St. Barbe at eleven and passed many peasants on the road, all in holiday attire. On arriving at our destination M. Maubert left us and took the horse back to Faouet and we having camp-stools took up our position and watched the people... as we saw no church from where we went in search of it and at a short distance we came upon a most extensive and a wild district... Close to the church and even with the roof was a bridge leading to a little shrine. The steps leading up to the bridge were lined with beggars of all descriptions, some of them picturesque, one in particular, a woman with a little child tied up after the fashion of the country and both looking very Italian. Finding that there was to be no dancing we returned home, which we reached about 8 o'clock, having been out 12 hours." (June 28)

The work resulting from these endeavours was considerable in amount, and Brownlow seems to have been endlessly industrious, using material over and over, working on more than one piece at once and utilising good and bad weather alike. Thus, she writes in her diary for July 6: "Monday. Painted in garden from 10 till about 12 then had a girl on staircase till abt 2, then Charles sat and after dinner I painted in my room till past 9 and had short walk in garden and to bed." She painted an oil sketch of the staircase in the house where they stayed, which is used as a setting for the little girl noted above, and she seems to have used plain interiors from their residence when figures were not to be had or posed: "It rained all day so finished staircase and began sketch

of kitchen, after writing home" (June 18). She was not immune to exploiting the sentimental possibilities of her subject-matter for a British audience: "Had a girl in Gourin costume to stand in the garden for a little love scene" (June 20); "Mrs. Maubert called me into the kitchen to look at the old charwoman's daughter, whom I detained and made a little sketch of her feeding chickens" (June 19) but, indeed, the touristic interest she took in her subject, akin to collecting rare specimens for an album, was sometimes not enough to secure her her object:

> "We hastened home, as a young man (Charles' son) had engaged to be with me at three to sit for my picture but 3 o'clock came and no man arrived and in fact he never came at all, so I worked on the background until dinner." (June 24)

> "After lunch Marianne's son Louis came in full Gourin dress to stand for scene in garden as I was unable to get my man during the week, all being engaged on the farm except on Sundays. It appears that there is a prejudice against sitting for me, the idea being that some evil will befall those connected with Protestants." (July 5)

> "In our walk we saw an uncommonly pretty girl in the Rosporden costume and we asked her to come to the Hotel the following morning, but she seemed frightened and would not come." (July 13)

However, models were obviously her favoured method of visualising a scene, although she felt able to work on in their absence or in face of the lack of them.

On July 10, the two sisters moved on to Quimper, the recipe for their activities being much the same as before:

> "Breakfast... at 10. Then into market which was most picturesque and the costumes varied and most peculiar. Some of the women in bright yellow caps, others in little flat caps on the tops of their heads, the back part of divers colours, looking very Chinese.

> Many men in the bragon-bras, bright light blue the predominant colour both for men and women.." (July 11)

> "Quite disappointed with the appearance both of the people and streets, both of which we had been led to expect to find picturesque. The men are very plain and common looking, with ordinary costume, nothing at all peculiar, and the women's dress is absolutely ugly." (July 19) 123

This was Morlaix, to which they went after Quimper. Sketching in Quimper market, the artist found again that her attentions were not necessarily wholly welcome to her subjects:

> "I made some slight and very rapid sketches but the people seemed either frightened or offended when they discovered that they wwere the objects of my attention, and either turned their backs or got out of sight as fast as they could, and if they did not at first perceive that I was looking at them, somebody was sure to tell them, so that I was surely sketching under difficulties." (July 18).

The latter part of the tour, however, seems to have been altogether less satisfying than the earlier weeks: they travelled on to Dinan, and to Avranches, exchanging Breton for Norman landscape, but "After dinner we explored the town and came to the conclusion that it is most uninteresting. There was not a single sketchable person or object of any kind" (July 25); "Not a picturesque figure to be seen" (July 26), and went on, via Vire and Caen, to Paris, which they reached by train on July 28. Here, a few more sight-seeing trips furnished more opportunity for Brownlow to comment on her contemporaries, this time her compatriots:

> "We were just preparing to set off for the Louvre, when Mrs. Perret came to our room to ask us if we would like to join a party and go to the Ste. Chapelle as they had an order so of course we went.. The Ste. Chapelle is 800 years old and the medallions are of course very pre Raphaelesque. They are however restoring them and reproducing

> them after the original designs, and I am sure that Millais and his PRB would jump for joy to see the awkward and ungainly objects that now adorn the walls." (July 30)

They went through the ritual of obesiance at the feet of the old masters, as any English visitor to Paris, artist or no, went through. Due to the paucity of information about the artist's early life, it is not known whether she went to the National Gallery or the British Institution in London to study and copy when she was younger, [124] but she notes the students in the Louvre:

> "Abt 12 we got to the Louvre where I was much pleased by inspecting the sketches and designs of the old masters, Michael Angelo, Raphael, etc. Then into the sculpture galleries.. Then into the Salle d'Apollo (sic) and the long Gallery, in which there were many artists copying, some of them very badly" (July 31).

Brownlow's estimate of the modern French school was typical of her period:

> "Went to the Luxembourg and was much pleased with the paintings. There is a very nice Bonheur "Loading a haycart" which pleased me much. There is a large painting by Vinon (?), of a female martyr, a very young girl tied in a chair, having her feet roasted. It is beautifully painted, but the subject like too many of the French school, very painful. (125) In the passage leading from the larger gallery to the smaller, were some chalk drawings, portraits and small, of which I did not think much.." (August 1)

The sisters left Paris for home on August 4, having been away for two months and having expended, the artist's diary records, £48. 17.4½d. They almost left behind them the fruits of the adventure:

> "On arriving at the station I found that my box of paintings etc. which had been in the care of Joseph, was left behind. Of course we were extremely vexed and obliged to send Mr. Perret back in a cab for it and we had to wait for an hour and pay 12 francs extra, to go by Calais instead of by Boulogne, as the trains were an hour later. Mr. Perret and the box arrived only just in time for the Calais train and we had to run, which was no joke on a hot day with two very heavy bags in one's hands."

She made no conclusion in her diary about the usefulness or satisfaction of the journey, but its effects were to be seen in her work from thence on. A number of her exhibited paintings from the remainder of the decade can be directly related to her trip abroad: "Waiting for a customer, Quimper Market" (1864), "Cabin Door in Brittany" (1864), "A Wedding Dance, Brittany" (1866), "Cottage interior, Brittany" (1866), "Une Chaumière, Brittany" (1866), "The Beggar's story" (1867), "The Riverside, Quimper" (1870), (fig.426). [126]

The latter part of the sixties was, in fact, a particularly fruitful time, with the Foundling Hospital commissions occurring here, too. The commissioners were benefactors of the Hospital, one of whom commissioned his portrait from the artist as well: Lt. Col. Hyde. [127] These paintings are uneven in their achievement, with the most satisfactory being perhaps the earliest "The Foundling restored to its Mother" (1858, fig.310), where the figures are easily related to the space in which they exist, their relationships are well-organised, and the colouring is not too heavy - elements which work less well in the "Taking Leave" (1868, fig.313) and the "Sick Room" (1864, fig.311). In all the scenes, however, the grouping of the figures - each of the pictures features at least five figures - is interesting and convincing and pleasantly casual; the most strained grouping being that in "Taking Leave", where there is a frontality to the composition which is happily absent from the other scenes, and seems somewhat contrived here. These paintings cannot be

conceived as in any way public commissions, although the Hospital was an Institution, because it was not the body itself that commissioned them but interested individuals, and they can have brought little increase in reputation for the artist, since only the "Foundling restored..." was exhibited (RA, 1858). Still, this one of the set was engraved in the Penny Magazine, after having been re-exhibited at the BI in 1866, and the original sketch for it went on show at the SFA in 1865. [128] However, when in 1864 the "Orphan Friends" was exhibited at the SFA, reviewers made no mention of her other Foundling Hospital works or of additional future commissions, though "The Christening" (fig. 312) had been painted the previous year, and "The Sick Room" was painted in 1864, with "Taking Leave" occurring four years later. One factor which lessens the impact of the set of works is their small scale, whether determined by resources or lack of confidence; this characterises them firmly as domestic scenes, not heroic pictures, and undermines their complexity and their collective effect.

Emma Brownlow's life changed somewhat in 1867, when she married. Her husband was Donald King, a singer in the theatrical world, whom she had met through the Hospital choir. Henceforth she called herself Mrs. Brownlow King, for professional purposes, and although she gave birth to four children (born 1869, 1870, 1870, 1872) [129] and her husband proved to be unreliable in financial matters, and died in 1886, she seems to have continued a steady output of work until the early 1870's. By the latter 1860's, she had had five paintings bought by AU prizewinners, [130] had added the Crystal Palace to the list of galleries where she showed, and had sold other praised works (e.g. "On Thoughts of Charity Intent" fig. 322, to the Duchess of Cambridge in 1865). A lack of detailed information about her patrons and sales makes it impossible to know to what extent she was able to live off her paintings: papers relating to the Brownlow family in the County Hall, London, fail to mention expenditure on painting materials or income from artistic endeavour, but it is evident that King's unreliability (and a hint of dishonesty) made her financial situation less than easy in the 1860's and 1870's. [131]

Quite a number of her pictures from this time can be presumed sold, however, since so many titles from this period are not to be found in public collections nor do they remain in the family. Critical assessments of her work at this time, however, indicate that her pictures were still far from perfect of their class, though she could surprise by her successes just as she could disappoint by her failures. "The Conscript's Departure" (fig.424), for instance, of 1865, was criticised in the following terms then and on its exhibition at the SFA two years later:

> "well-illustrated, but with something of a tendency to melodramatic treatment"
> "It tells the story well, and there is great character in some of the figures - more in the subordinate than the leading ones - but the work is marred by coarse painting"
> "... not without pathos in its expression, but rather tame in design, and very crudely handled." 132

Most tantalisingly, this work is not now known; similarly untraced, from the same period, are "Between the Acts" (1866) and "News from the War" (1869), though "The Riverside at Quimper" (1870, fig. 426) does remain, in the artist's family, to represent the artist's later work, if not her treatment of modern issues. "News from the War" may well be nothing but a contrivedly-titled sentimental fancy - the subtitle is "to whom a victory speaks of <u>his</u> return, and a defeat means only <u>he</u> is lost" - but "Between the Acts" seems, from critical descriptions, to return to the modern history scene of social concern with which her early drawings were pre-occupied; the <u>Illustrated London News</u> reviewer described it thus:

> "A poor woman - a widow, as we learn by portions of her garments lying about among the dingy tawdry finery of the green room - has just left a stage where she has been enacting the part of some tragedy queen, and now impatiently taking the tinselled diadem from her brow, stoops to kiss her poor delicate looking child, her widowed heart cruelly wrung, perhaps by some passages in her part of terrible application to her own case." 133

The Ladies Companion review expands, that "the squalid room exhibits all the bareness of poverty, and the wretched habilments and worn-out boots littering the floor and table are eloquent of sad realities." [134] As has been shown to be the case with so many female painters of the period, Brownlow treated the world of women, by preference, but her suggested conservatism and her evident technical limitations could have been enough to dissuade her from more contentious or topical excursions within that world, than she generally took on; had she kept on the more challenging path of subject which her early sketches suggest, and which these few paintings of the late 1860's echo, she might well have emerged from the crowd of domestic painters with whom she was identified, to a more notable extent. [135]

Her later life is dominated by domestic upheaval and tribulation, and no clue as to how her artistic activity declined or to what extent it became eclipsed, has come to light. As has been said, the artist's exhibition waned in the '70's and ceased altogether after 1877, though a letter of mid-1874 from Brownlow's mother to the family advisor Wintle, suggests that the artist's four children "will be entirely dependant (sic) on her for education etc.", indicating that her breadwinning ability would be even more acutely important then than it might have been earlier in her career; this suggestion of her mother's makes sense when in other documents of this time, it is made to seem likely that the artist's husband's health was in danger, due to paralytic attacks. It was in this year that the artist's remaining sister died (John Brownlow having expired the previous year) and although Donald King lasted until 1886, in fact, he himself expresses anxiety in papers of 1876 about the possibility that he might die suddenly, leaving his dependents indigent. An address of 1872 in Herne Bay, Kent (doubtless for health reasons) suggests another factor for the artist's increasing withdrawal from the London exhibition scene at this time. In short, what seems to happen in the latter three decades of the artist's life, is that she gives up her art for her family: the invidious choice between being a woman and being an artist has to be made, and the woman (or, rather, conventional notions thereof)

wins out over the artist.

The 1880's and 1890's were a series of moves of residence (back to London, to the Isle of Wight) and family deaths (King in 1886, her daughter Marian the same year, her mother between 1881 and 1886), culminating in a staggered emigration to Australasia, for reasons of health: the artist's son John was sent to Sydney in 1887, the artist herself and her remaining two daughters went to New Zealand in 1888, returning in 1889, to take up an unsettled residence in the south of England (moving from the Isle of Wight to Bradford on Avon to Bournemouth, always the location determined by its healthiness and its expense.) Throughout this time, there is no mention in the artist's correspondence with her advisors of any breadwinning activity on her part as a painter, [136] and this, combined with the lack of visual evidence of work dated this late, must lead to the conclusion that she did, in fact, give up painting. She was by now, of course, in her fifties, and took on yet another voyage to Australasia at the end of the 1880's, for the sake of her children's health, sailing for Auckland in 1896, thence for Ceylon in 1901, after which time she returned home and took up residence in Croydon in 1901, from whence she moved to a healthier place (she had written to Wintle in February 1900, "For myself, I have been in very failing health for some time past"), eventually living in Kent, where she died on the first day of 1905.

Late photographs show that Brownlow's crowded life had told on her: in 1883 (fig.427) she already looks weary and resigned, and unhealthily plump, while in 1904 (fig.428) her seventy-odd years show very clearly through her smile. Although she had produced a substantial body of work, and had been moderately successful over the years, the irrestible impression remains that she never quite pushed herself far enough to become more than an uneven painter who had potential. Probably lack of art education and certain conflict of commitment - characteristic of so many women painters of her generation - undoubtedly feature in this to an enormous extent. She is typical of the woman of her time in that she ultimately gave her family commitments priority over her commitment

to art, yet very untypical in the energy and persistence which she injected into her practice of art, and it is to be regretted that more of her work does not remain to allow a reliable assessment of just how much potential went unrealised in the long run. Brownlow is also sadly typical of many female artists of her generation, in that even the modest reputation which she justly enjoyed in her own time, is at the present time no more.

Louisa Stuart, Lady Waterford

Louisa Stuart, Lady Waterford, born in 1818, was one of the most celebrated amateurs of the mid-century period and, thereby, somewhat atypical of the non-professional female painter, who flourished rather in the shadows than in the limelight. She fully represents the type in other respects, however: she had a marked but idiosyncratic talent, and she used it for pleasure not for monetary reward, while both the time and the interest she had for Art were derived from a lifestyle which incorporated into its routine a large amount of leisure and an appreciation of the arts for their own sake, and she retained a self-deprecation which kept her from true artistic fame and serious success. She was aristocratic, and to some extent this was a necessary condition for the amateur, for this meant not only leisure but also funds and opportunity for the practice of art, and a background and milieu in which taste was a quality most diligently pursued and cultivated.[137] Because of her atypicality, Waterford is possible to study; because of her typicality, she is valuable to study.

Lady Waterford was cited, just after her death in 1891, as an example of the female artist, by Florence Fenwick-Miller, in her "Ladies' Column" in the Illustrated London News.[138] It is notable that, even at this late date, debate about the ends of women's artistic endeavours and about the use of their creative energies was still worthwhile and even necessary, engaging the young generation and the older together. Fenwick-Miller wrote, in part:

> "Mrs. Jopling has been writing about the reason why women do not more frequently attain the first rank in art (139). She attributes it mainly to the fact that most girls who have the means to study art at all do so merely for their own pleasure, and lack the urgent goal of necessity... One feels how true this is when one see that even amidst the distractions of society some ladies snatch time to do just enough excellent work to show that they might do better. In the present exhibition of the New Gallery there is an admirable portrait of Mr. Paderewski by Princess Louise Marchioness of Lorne; and the genuine ability of the Marchioness of Granby as a portrait-painter is well-known. Even more remarkable as an instance of this, however, is the collection of the works of the late Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford, which Princess Christian opened to the public the other day at Countess Brownlow's house in Carlton House Terrace. Striking and original as these works are, they ought to have been better... (It is) sad that such original talent as Lady Waterford displayed on the works now shown was so much overlaid and smothered by her social position. Lady Waterford was not married till she was thirty years old, and she had not any children - facts which have some bearing on her work in art."

Though few other critics discussed, even by implication, the relevance of marriage and motherhood to the amateur's achievement, Fenwick-Miller's overall assessment of Waterford as an artist is typical of the verdict that was generally reached on her. A closer look at the artist's life, however, both emphasises and qualifies the judgment of her as a 'might-have-been', over whom one shakes one's head sadly but understandingly.

Louisa Stuart was born in Paris in 1818, her father being at that time the British Ambassador to France. The family returned to England, however, in 1824, to reside in Hampshire (Highcliffe Castle) and to take its part in British high society.[140] Louisa was presented at court in 1835, and she and her sister Charlotte were

apparently celebrated for their charm and beauty. Charlotte was a year older than Louisa, and a very important person in her younger sister's life: in Virginia Surtees' words, "the two sisters were bound to each other by the closest ties of affection, strengthened by sharing the same inner spiritual life, and united by the same artistic endeavour." [141] A contemporary makes a somewhat different point, but does not contradict the notion of their mutual importance:

> "In their devotion to each other, Charlotte and Louisa were one, though as opposite as possible - Charlotte gentle, retiring, clever, and goodness itself, never saying or doing what she ought not; Louisa, in the highest spirits, always getting into trouble by hearing or seeing what was not intended for her... and perfectly devoted to her paintboxes at ten years old." 142

Charlotte was to marry in 1835, and twenty years later was obliged to go to live in India with her husband as Vicerine of India, where she died in 1861, but in their younger lives the sisters were very close, and developed an interest in art together. Their parents took them to Naples and Rome in their youth, and Louisa accompanied Charlotte and her husband to Italy in 1836, the two women particularly spending time in Rome. An account of Louisa's artistic education is found in Clayton:

> "Lady Waterford, as a child, was taught to copy large chalk heads after French pictures. These studies, with a few lessons in landscape from Mr. Page, formed an unsatisfactory groundwork. Later, copying a portrait in oils from Sir Joshau with an artist named Shepherdson completed all she ever learnt from masters. Lady Waterford's real teaching was gained from the art treasures of the galleries at Rome..." 143

Clayton's romanticism should perhaps be tempered by the recollections of someone who remained a close observer of Waterford's progress, her first cousin Charles Stuart, who, in his Short Sketch of the Life of Louisa Marchioness of Waterford, published in 1892, recalled:

> "The children were in their earliest years admirably educated by their wise and excellent mother, herself no mean artist; and Louisa, almost from her infancy, evinced a strong taste and talent for drawing. This talent was always encouraged, and I have no doubt she had many drawing masters, but I do not remember the name of any instructor of note." 144

The influence most admitted by the artist and of most significance in determining her aesthetic position, was that of John Ruskin, whom she met in the early 1850's. Even before this encounter, however, her own tendencies in art can be seen to have inclined towards a Ruskinian combination of love and observation of nature with moralising themes carried out in an awareness of Italianate sytlistic ideals. Augustus Hare, in his biography of the artist, records that in the early 1840's, "some of her most careful figure studies were taken from the peasant girls and cabin life round her Irish home." 145 She had married, in 1842, Henry Lord Waterford, whose estates were in southern Ireland, at Curraghmore; Hare further recounts a truly Ruskinian industry on the artist's part at this period:

> "She had already also begun the series of 'little books' which were her lifelong companions, and which her friends grew to look upon as part of herself. These many volumes, one of which was always within reach, were mere little 'betting books' in which she sketched passing people, scenes, or events; or, still more, fleeting ideas and inspirations in pencil, pen or colour, usually finishing them by candle-light."

> "Whenever Lady Waterford was left alone, she would send for Miss Palliser, and they spent whole days in a little painting-room, where they had models, and worked hard as long as daylight lasted, only going out to walk at dusk." 146

A letter to her mother of November 1849 suggests the sort of subject-matter which was to remain her preference throughout her life:

> "I am scratching ideas for my 'Virtues and Contrasts'. For the contrast to 'Thirsty, and ye gave me to drink', I am thinking of making a field of battle and a stripped (I could not stand a uniform) and dying soldier calling to some women passing by with pitchers of water on their heads, which they are making signs to refuse, their backs half turned - as if he was a dying man on the enemy's side and they would not help him. Do you think I can make all this understood? I was so glad to think of a subject without the eternal ragged people as a type of poverty and misery, which is in general, so far from the truth in reality." 147

This indicates Waterford's awareness of trends in popular art as well as her wish to set against them forms of more grandeur and boldness, [148] embodying always a Christian moral rather than a simply worldly one. This classical ambition led her to look for the universal application even of the specific which she observed, in Ruskinian fashion, around her and in her own fancy. A letter of late 1851 describes well this position, and conveys the enthusiasm for art itself which was supposed to bespeak the amateur in its best sense:

> "I do <u>love</u> my art (dare I call it mine?) far more than ever, and long to do a great work. Meantime I labour at the merest correctness, which leads me to discover more and more in every work of Nature; a dead leaf in all its curves and forms seems to disclose so much more than one sees at first..." 149

The Preraphaelite sympathy which speaks here, and which brought Waterford and Ruskin together, is first specifically seen in an undated letter to Mrs. Bernal Osborne, written probably in 1852 or 1853:

> "I hope to be in London in June, and have especial curiosity to see what the Pre-Raphaelites have done this year, whether they are beginning to allow themselves a little beauty in moderate quantities. I

> respect them for abstaining from the pretty, and am sure theirs is the only school which will come at real beauty at last, so we must be content to let them pass through all their phases of ugliness first." 150

In June 1853, the artist was enabled by Ruskin to visit Millais' studio while she was in London for the art season. She also called on Hunt during this stay in town, and sufficiently impr ssed the whole circle to be included in the names for the Brotherhood's projected sketching club in early 1854. In his turn, Rossetti recalled a visit by the admiring amateur, in June 1855, again arranged by Ruskin: "He sent here the other day a stunner called Marchioness of Waterford, who had expressed a wish to see me paint in watercolours, it seems, she herself being really first-rate as a designer in that medium", [151] he wrote to William Allingham at the end of the month; early in July he wrote to his mother,

> "An astounding event is coming off tomorrow. The Marchioness of Waterford has expressed a wish to Ruskin to see me paint in water-colour, as she says my method is inscrutable to her. She is herself an excellent artist, and would have been really great, I believe, if not born such a swell and such a stunner.." 152

In his own prejudiced way, Rossetti makes the same point that both Jopling and Fenwick-Miller were making so much later. Waterford's ultimate non-consummation of her talents, however, was as much hampered by her residence in Ireland as by her gender and by her class with its attendant duties, for she was thus out of the main-stream of art events and discussion and could engage with other artists or art enthusiasts only by letter or at long and irregular intervals. She maintained an interest in Preraphaelitism, however, mostly through Ruskin, that extended eventually to a concern with the ideas and personalities of the second generation of the movement, particularly Burne-Jones.

What it was that Ruskin did for the artist's work is arguable; depending on one's position on Ruskin himself. Clayton, writing in

1876 and presumably paraphrasing Waterford herself, put forward a moderate assessment of his influence: "She has never had a master for figure drawing, or subject painting, or composition of any kind, but always remembers gratefully the friendly interest shown in her works by Mr. Ruskin." [153] Waterford, herself, in her letters and diary, supports that interpretation of Ruskin's significance for her: "Ruskin is the reverse of the man I like, and yet his intellectual part is quite my ideal"; "There is a charm in Ruskin's writing that I find in no other, though he often provokes me, and I sometimes disagree with it." [154] Some judgments made after the artist's death, however, from people who could have known very well what they were talking about, differed due to their own opposition to Ruskin; Mrs. Steuart Erskine, writing in the Studio in 1910, wrote:

> "Lady Waterford at one time had lessons from Ruskin, the only lessons which she is ever known to have taken since her childhood. These lessons did more harm than good. Ruskin worried her and insisted on her painting minutely in the Pre-Raphaelite style, in a manner totally foreign to her nature... Still, she had a great admiration for Ruskin, and read every one of his books with eager interest; while he had an enthusiastic admiration for her as a colourist." 155

Ruskin's 'lessons' took the form of seemingly endless advice and criticism transmitted personally and by letter, seldom complimentary and othen recriminatory. His and Waterford's own letters indicate the line which Ruskin's interest in her art tended to take: in 1855, he declared to her that "in drawing, as in music, the greatest power can only be attained by those who have capacity of greatest tenderness: - that with refinement you gain at once grasp and decision.." [156] and was soon commending to her his own favourite models: "By the bye - do go into the national gallery and look at the leaves round the head of Bacchus in Titian's Bacchus and Ariadne - and at the vine leaves - and at everything." Such recommendations recurred often over the years:

"I seriously wonder how when you can do so much, you do not wish to get the full and tender quality of Titian as well as the power; Why, among these studies - is there no copy of Titian, or a bit of Titian - I should not care what model you took - Titian - Verones - or Tintoret or Giorgione - or Bassan - or Bellini - but I should like to see you setting yourself a higher standard by choosing one of them." (June 1857)

"Please don't leave London without examining the head of the Bacchus in Titian's picture in the National Gallery as a perfect example of breadth and finish." (July 1857)

"You ask if a sketch from Titian would be useful. No - a sketch would not - but if you took any bit of a Titian - say two inches square - and copied that, in colour of its real size - so as to feel exactly where your own work failed - you could soon see all that had to be done." (July/August 1857) 157

What Ruskin's strictures also convey, is the urging towards harder work and more methodical industry that women, in general, were pressed by critics to undertake to improve their work. If this is forcing her towards Preraphaelitism, then it was in the constructive sense which recognised women's enforced amateurism as one of their greatest hindrances to real achievement in fine art. Ruskin, however, was only erratically understanding of the reasons why a woman - not just Lady Waterford - suffered from a lack of application and a paralysing self-deprecation; he seemed to have seen his role as schoolmaster rather than companion, which, though it might in the end be useful to a woman, exploited her low self-esteem and habitual position of receptor of male wisdom: Waterford, though a thinking woman, shows herself to have accepted this intellectually conventional position, tven though she might emotionally rail against it now and then: she recalled in 1863 "Ruskin's visit was only a moving one, as the cottage was quite full. He condemned (very justly) my frescoes, and has certainly spirited me up to do better." 158

Though her preferred subjects and stylistic features reflect

Ruskin's enthusiasm for Titian, Veronese and earlier Italianate examples, it need not be thought that such preferences were not the artist's own. Venetian colouring and Renaissance uses of the allegorical and monumental figure, occur often in various contexts: "Sweetest Eyes" (fig. 429), "The Stairs of Life" (fig. 408), "Autumn with a Sieve" (fig. 430), "Looking out to Sea" (fig. 431), and the frescoes which she mentions above, commenced in 1861 and seen by the artist as her major work (though not her best), all show these features. At the same time, however, her classicism was not meant by her to be a simple reproduction of past achievements, and, indeed, for all the familiarity of the devices or types she uses, her work has a freshness and animation which has no stale imitation about it. In 1863, she wrote to a friend:

> "I want to do a <u>modern</u> representation of the Holy Family, represented by a real poor cottage mother and child, who have taken refuge in a snowy barn, and are found and comforted by the love of poor neighbours, who bring their offerings, as the shepherds and kings of old - taking the composition of the old masters exactly as a model, and trying to treat modern dress and rags as picturesquely as I can." 159

In similar vien, classicism becomes modern in such pieces as "Supper after Hunting", with its saintlike silhouettes; "Family Group at Curraghmore", like a sacra conversazione; "The Child's Secret", resembling a madonna and child; "The Reapers", redolent of a Ruth and Boaz scene; (all illustrated in Hare); or "The Education of the Virgin" (fig. 392), more intimate and human than a Renaissance treatment of the same theme. It is the amatuer's obeisance to the old masters that characterises Waterford's choice of subject more than any other tendency, but in a particularly Christian spirit. Hence "The Feast of Tabernacles", "The sleeping Disciples" (fig. 393), "Naomi, Ruth and Orpah", and the fresco cycle at Ford, (figs. 82, 83, 84 and figs. 85-89), the village to which she retired after her husband's death in 1859.

The series of frescoes on the walls of the schoolroom at Ford [160] -

not, strictly speaking, frescoes, since the painting is in water-colour on paper and board which was then mounted on the walls: rather, murals - depict children in Biblical scenes or narratives, with an endpiece of "Suffer the little children to come unto me" at one end, and "Christ among the Doctors" at the other. They betray Ruskinian interest in natural detail, with an Italianate use of roundels and draped figures. The variety in composition and figural grouping is pleasing, but the success of those figures is very uneven and their placing within their contexts runs from the ambitiously successful ("Samuel and his Parents", fig. 85), through the happily simple ("David the Shepherd", fig. 85 , "Moses and Miriam", fig. 89), to the unfortunate ("Cain and Abel", fig. 86). The colouring is impossible to fairly assess now, but was, to judge from material now in the possession of the current occupier of Ford Castle, of lesser importance to the artist than was the composition. The unsatisfactory elements of these pictures - the faulty anatomy, the flaws in perspective, the idiosyncratic compositional devices - contrast strongly with the good drawing, and the broadly flowing line, and make one wish that Ruskin's reproaches on accuracy and method had enjoined her to a more solid form of Preraphaelitism than she, in fact, ultimately manifested. In the few pieces still remaining which show tighter line and closer study - like the Victoria and Albert Museum's "Mentone Fisherman", (fig. 432), none of the charm is lost with accuracy, but its discipline adds to the rigour that supports charm.

Nearly all Waterford's drawings and paintings are undated, indicating both her prolific activity and the fact that her pieces of work did not have for her the status of complete art objects [161]; these are surely characteristics of the female amateur, and make for work which is pleasing to the spectator but unsatisfying to the artist's peers, it seems. Hare's response to this does not reflect very creditably on the artist herself:

> "People have often blamed Lady Waterford's pictures because they were not finished more highly. It was not in her to finish

them. She painted as the birds sing, because she could not help it. The thought, the impression, the inspiration, it may be, came to her, and she felt impelled to transfer it to paper. Beyond that she could not go. What was said was said, and what was thought was thought. Her pictures were her words and her thoughts." 162

This does not do justice to the industry with which she practised her art, which can be testified to by her own writing and by the observation of others, but it does suggest the art for art's sake approach which lent the doing more status than the done thing. A letter from the artist herself, however, to her cousin and fellow-artist Eleanor Vere Boyle, in response to Clayton's request for information on Waterford for English Female Artists, [163] shows a greater amount of insight into her own situation as an extraordinary amateur, than her biographer displays:

> "The honest truth is, I had far rather Miss Clayton should say nothing about me. How can I say this civilly? The school pictures are not good enough to deserve mention, and the idea of an account of them in print is quite odious to me... It goes against the grain to an extent I cannot describe to have it in any way spoken of as a thing that is worth it. So, dear Ella, do say 'I know my cousin Lady Waterford had rather not have anything said about her works. She is not satisfied with them herself, and would take it as a kindness that, if named, it should be in the most cursory way as attempt in the right direction'. I wish you could see me inside out, and that mock modesty is not the reason of my saying this, but a feeling (which I believe a right one) that these things, or anything I have ever done, cannot be classed as real good things, only as the work of one who would have been an artist if it had been her fate to earn her bread and to go through a greater amount of study." 164

This letter was written in 1875, and as she got older, Waterford seemed to perceive the mixed blessings of her situation more and more, the conflicting demands which her position and her ambition

made on her having an increasingly frustrating effect on her: to EVB again, she wrote in 1878:

> "Oh, I have not a minute to draw. I feel often so discouraged when I have to think of bills and affairs, and servants and people to look after. Art only comes in with the dregs, and then I am tired out in body and mind, and a book is the only rest. No, a poor woman who is a proprietress has no power to make anything of Art, and I saw my own great shortcomings very clearly at the Grosvenor Gallery. I feel the tortoises have all won the race, and endless women can do better than me now." 165

And the following year:

> "I am greatly discouraged about my artwork. Not a creature cares, or knows, or observes if I do a thing or not, and if it is done, it is passed over unseen. Not that praise signifies, but poor humanity needs encouragement, or one becomes too listless." 166

She was aware that the situation of women in art had changed, as the letter above indicates; in the 1860's she had met Annie Dixon, who, as a woman who practised professionally, was an invigorating contrast to Waterford, who thought her "a character resembling those in Currer Bell's novels", and recognised her as "honest and independent" (figs. 233, 234 and 97); her awareness of Clayton's book doubtless brought her notice of many other women artists, both professional and amateur; and in writing to EVB she was corresponding with a woman who, though like herself an amateur, had achieved the recognition that only completed and whole works could command [167]; it was in a letter to this woman, in 1880, that Waterford referred to the most telling change that women in the arts had experienced during Waterford's career: "I get rather dispirited at my failures, and the want of that knowledge and finish I see in all women's work at exhibitions when they have had good training: there was none in my day..." [168]

The new step of participation in exhibition, which Waterford took with the opening of the Grosvenor, not only brought her to wider attention than before, but gave her an opportunity to see herself in a new perspective. It was evidently a new impetus to work, also:

> "I am so afraid I shall have little done for the Grosvenor but I am working, and am doing the married pairs for it. Shall I call it "Three Phases of Life", or "Youth, Middle Age and Old Age?" I fear it won't be understood."
>
> "I have done two poor little drawings for the Grosvenor Gallery from a child's rhyme called "The Shower" - the fine young ladies caught in the rain, and the poor girls not minding it."
>
> "Iaam drawing for many..." 169

The self-deprecation which never ceases should perhaps be attributed, as much to those factors which have already been discussed, to the artist's Christianity, which would be enough, in itself, to explain her humility towards her talents and her refusal to glorify her pictures as objects in themselves, and which would have conspired to lessen her ambition for fame and her discontent with her lot. Surtees goes so far as to maintain that it was the Christian motive which was Waterford's moving spirit:

> "The direction of her life was ordered by deeply-held religious convictions... and although later her High Church views resolved themselves into the more moderate doctrines of the Church of England, she never departed from her belief that life should be founded on prayer, and... it will be found that Lady Waterford's search was directed towards humility in a life of service." 170

In the end, Waterford's achievements were by no means ignored: at her death in 1891, a large exhibition of her drawings and paintings was held privately in London, to which critics responded with enthusiasm:

> "It is remarkable that a lady distinguished by high rank and extraordinary beauty should have had the industry and energy to abstract herself from the temptations of her social position and devote talents which were themselves unique for a long course of years to the pursuit of art... showing the world.., an admirable colourist and vivid interpreter of poetry and pathos. Lady Waterford was one of the best sketchers of the day..." 172

Already, in 1863, critics could describe her as "one of our best amateur artists", but the adjectives undermine each other's effectiveness: the recieved notion that she <u>was</u> an amateur to some extent conditioned the reception that her work could have: for instance, it was her allegorical, fanciful, and infantine pieces which were mostly recalled by commentators after her death, not her modern or even her Shakespearean subjects, [174] and it was her modesty, not the ambition which gave rise to it, which was recalled as characteristic of her, on her exhibitions in 1892 and 1910. The opening remark from the catalogue to this latter exhibition, of over 300 pieces or work, sums up as well as any observer did, what Waterford's position was: "The pictures that are exhibited here today are the work of a lady whose life was not especially devoted to art, but whose whole being was imbued with the sense of it." [175] The claims that were made for her work, both before and after her death - made from the safety of her accepted amateur status - seem now over-ambitious: for Ruskin to mention Veronese in the same breath as her name, for Watts and Burne-Jones to suggest she could be "an artist as great as Venice knew", to say that her sense of composition had rarely been surpassed, [176] diminishes her art rather than elevates it, in retrospect, so exaggerated do such parallels seem. Had she been a professional artist, she must have been an artist like Watts,himself, or Leighton, and they were not distorted by aggrandisement, but praised for what they were. Waterford, however, because she was female and aristocratic, and a remarkable instinctive artist, stood in her own day as a contradiction in terms, and her example bid fair to break down those mutually exclusive categories 'woman' and 'genius' as well as thos jointly oppressive

categories 'woman' and 'amateur'. That such a breaking down did not, in the end, take place in her case, cannot be attributed solely to her equivocal stance on the question, but demonstrates resoundingly how tenacious were the threads which entangled female artists in the period.

Rosa Brett

A very different sort of amateur was Rosa Brett, whose position as a woman - located within a middle-class family, overshadowed by a successful brother, expected to be a second mother to her siblings, and equivocal about fame, though not about her love for art - is much more typical of the period than was Waterford's. Very much the type of 'the ones that got away', Brett's representative value is much the same as Brownlow's, though her aesthetic position, firmly within Preraphaelitism, is much different from that artist's.

Rosa Brett was born in the early 1830's, the daughter of a soldier, Charles Curtis Brett, and his wife Anne Philbeam (although the Dictionary of National Biography has her name as Philbrick), the only girl of five children. [177] The family was resident in Dublin, because of the father's army posting, in the early years of Rosa's life, but later took up residence in northern Kent (where they were to stay for the length of Rosa's career) which became the region of her inspiration, providing the locales for most of her landscapes and the themes for her rare figural work (there are sketches in her notebooks and studies of hop-pickers and hopping equipment, fig. 272). [178] Information about her early life has not come to light, even with the help of the artist's family's archives: she first emerges as a recognisable individual in her diary of 1851 (actually started December 7th, 1850.) [179]

At the end of 1850, Rosa had evidently been learning painting and drawing for a while, with her brother John, for both are working for local patrons: the first entry in her diary (7.12.1850) reads:

"John went again today to Lushington's for his portfolio, they bought none of his drawings but chose one of mine, a view of York copied from one of Mr. Booty's (?) done in pencil on coloured card, with Chinese white on the highlights, they of course thought it was John's it having no name to it. They gave a guinea for it. I was very much surprised to hear they had chosen one of mine this being the first I ever sold - gave John 5/- Arthur 1/- and 6d between Theodore and Edwin out of it - painted out the picture of the blight for Dr. Plumbley (180) and gave Arthur a music lesson did not go out today not being well enough."

In spite of her faulty punctuation, one senses a sensible and straightforward, not falsely modest but by no means confident young woman, with no idea of asserting her art herself; it reaches the worl via her brother, as it was to do again later when she had become more of an artist. Already indicated here, is the ill health which was to set her back in later years, and which was a hindrance to her independence as it was with so many women of her time. This, combined with her being the only girl in a family where self-sacrifice on the part of some members was needed if others in the circle were to achieve their ambitions, anticipates the inhibitions which her career suffered.

The drawing she sold was of a sort that looked like scraperboard, a drawing in pencil and white on light blue or brown card, the like of which remain among her sketches, one being of "Boxley Church, Kent" (a moonlight scene); she was very industrious, both in the production of these drawings and generally, though her busy life seems to have been filled more with art-oriented activities - whether drawing, framing, and mounting drawings for her brother's pupils, or going out in the countryside sketching - than with anything else, though domestic duties took much of her time, including long hours spent teaching her younger brothers. The entries in her diary for a few days in the middle of winter 1850, give an idea of the daily round that was typical for her at this period:

"11th.december. Painted at the 'blight' gave Arthur a lesson went out, and in the evening mounted some more drawings"

"13th.december. This morning house work as usual, painted at the 'blight' and finished it, afterwards went to see Grandma, returned at about 5 o'clock. I then set some more drawings helped John to re-arrange the painting room. After tea I dressed and went with Arthur and Theodore to hear a lecture on the works of Charles Dickens."

The routine she followed was an arduous one - she writes of working till it is dark, of going to bed at 1 o'clock in the morning, on one occasion of rising at 2 in the morning to work before breakfast - and it often included whole days spent on other people, usually the male members of the family. Thus her dairy entry for Tuesday, 7 Jan. 1851: "After breakfast Arthur began to practise, he practised all day till bed-time... I sat by during all Arthur's practise"; 8 Jan. 1851: "Spent the whole of the day until 6 in the evening in directing John's circulars and inclosing them". In the conventional spirit of womanly self-sacrifice to more important people, it was her brother John, in particular, who was the recipient of much of this self-sacrifice, willingly done: she writes, in mid-February, when a "Fungus" has replaced the now finished "Blight" as the work in progress:

"Mr. N. King and his brother called they came into the Painting room I had to make my escape not wishing anyone to see me working at the Fungus as the work passes for John's"

"Mr. Dobney called to see John's picture he brought with him a Mr. Batter soon after Plomley came and they were all in the Painting room together, and I was listening outside the door."

From her evidence, Rosa and John worked in collaboration at this time, but it was John who took the pupils and John who was promoted, or seeking promotion, as an artist.[181] Both the troublesome

'Blight' set (of at least 7 drawings) and the 'Fungus', she records as being joint creations, and John conceived plans which involved the two of them going out together on sketching expeditions, to produce saleable work. The products of such forays into the surrounding Kentish countryside are of a very variable quality, and Rosa's and John's are, but for their signatures, much of a muchness in motif and touch. As John became more experienced (as the fifties went on), of course, his work shows a confidence which his sister's work does not necessarily betray, though her Farnhurst drawings of 1853 (figs. 434 and 435), made on a joint trip, are capable and charming. The extent to which the two collaborated comes out so strongly in the 1851 diary that it is rather alarming to find commentators of John Brett's work completely failing to consider the role his sister played in his early career and giving no consideration at all to the therefore questionable authenticity of his early work. [182]

The two were certainly very productive at this time, though many of the pieces mentioned by name in Rosa's diary are no longer certainly extant: during the spring of 1851, for instance, she mentions an "Aylesford", a "Thurnham", a "Red Cow on Penenden Heath", and reports sketching trips to Ightham (August), Boxley (August), Detling (August) and other locales. Her industry already prefigures a Preraphaelite conscientiousness, which her thorough sketchbooks from thr 1870's confirm as an enduring approach. Passages from her notes of 1851 recall the earnestness of Ford Madox Brown, bespeaking a seriousness in her art which was undermined by her reluctance to assert herself publicly, explaining to a large degree why she ultimately made no reputation for herself. The endeavour for excellence which can result in never achieving satisfaction in the work produced, familiar from Waterford's letters, is obvious from her diary:

> "20th.august ... went with J to a lane about four fields behind Boxley Mill, Boiling hot, got one sketch each, obliged to be home at 2 for Wilmer, J's pupil, (183), before going out I fixed his drawings while he was having his lesson I mount and pressed them,

then I began to paint at my view in the Garden, laid in the Sky with Ult. Marine, when too dark to see, had a romp with Sancho..."

"21st.august ... washed out the sky - the Ult. Marine sky I put in yesterday - washed or rather sponged it out clean and put it in again, darker, but not quite so flat. Dined and went to sketch at same place as yesterday... returned home after sunset very tired indeed, the distance being rather long, the weather hot and roads hilly, got 2 sketches."

22nd.august... went out in the field and began to sketch it. but having a bad headache found the light too much for my eyes, so obliged to come in, set to work at my little picture in our garden with the Ult. Marine sky, painted till dinner, after dinner painted again, part of the time in the garden, I can paint much better out of doors from nature than in the house."

"23rd.august ...this morning made some more size, and did over the Print. carried my large Easle (sic) out of the painting room into the garden.... I worked in the Garden at my garden views, at about 10 Miss Dads called, I had her asked into the Garden to me... she left and I went to work again until about 1, then I prepared size and did the Print over for the seventh and last time, resumed my work again till half past four when we dined... after dinner painted in the garden until it rained so hard that I was obliged to retreat into the house... after the shower out again and painted till too dark to see. after tea, varnished the prints up in the Drawing room.."

"25th.august ... began with the garden scene I finished yesterday it is as I thought it would be horrid..."

There is a disarming acceptance that plein-air painting is the thing to do, which is, it seems, undeterred by the inconveniences of weather or of subservience to the etiquette of not being out alone. Brett's industry must be seen, at the same time as it bespeaks her earnestness and the Preraphaelite approach to her subject which remained her, less positively as reflective of the profligate

expenditure of energy which young women were expected and encouraged to make on pastimes of very varying fruitfulness, though it is pleasant to see that, once it becomes apparent that both Rosa's and John's art could add to the family (in financial returns) rather than take away from it (in consumption of time and energy), this early industry bears fruit; though it must always do battle with the artist's (again, surely typically female) self-deprecation.

Her brother John, who seems, from his own letters and diaries, to have suffered no lack of assertiveness, despite the doubts that every young Werther has as to his own abilities, wrote of Rosa's character in his diary in February, 1853, by which time the once constant companions were separated by John's having gone to London to seek success as an artist:

> "I respect her talent and admire her depth of character and love her real 'heart' though the stream flows so silently and deep beneath the surface as only to be noticed occasionally and when called forth in circumstances when other powers of the soul avail not..."

Thus, when Rosa finally submitted work to the Academy, in 1858, she used a pseudonym ("Rosarius", a male name [184]) and insisted that her brother, who handled the picture for her, not reveal her identity.

Without a certain knowledge of whether Rosa ever had a formal instruction in art, the learning in techniques and in art-world processes which she got from John, are extremely important to take into account. Once he went to London, Rosa became a more independent worker, but she continued to take advice from her brother, and their letters are full of painters' talk. He seems to have become more and more self-absorbed as his career took shape - in his diary for March 1852 however, he wrote: "in books and art I have spiritual companions and in my sister a material one" - but Rosa relied on him for assistance and advice throughout the '50's.

A letter from John to Rosa in 1858 (when he was abroad) gives not only detailed technical and practical advice but also praise of her assiduity:

> "I am rather astonished at your painting proceedings I must say. I thought I was doing rather a feat to get up at 5 and to work by ½ past 7 am! I am glad you can manage to carry out your scheme... About the sky, I have just got my sky in. The blue I put on with a sharp tool, bouncing it down on its point perpendicularly, driving the paint into the grain, using no medium (you hardly ever want medium if you finish at once;) and laying the paint scantily. You can get it beautifully flat this way. (Afterwards you can with your finest sable fill up any little holes), but after bouncing it in, I pat it very delicately with the broadside of the brush held between thumb and finger, to make it lie down. The clouds I put in pretty much at once as I mean them to be. - you may depend all very good painting is done at once."

He also takes, as well as giving: "I think 'a violet bank' will be sufficient title for that watercolour of mine, don't you?" and he asks her to let his studio for him and to handle his exhibition works while he is away.[185]

How closely she followed his advice, or how completely she relied on his assistance, is difficult to say, when his works from that period have survived but hers have not, or cannot be identified. However, John mentions some pieces by his sister in 1852: her portrait of Edwin, which she is working on in April of that year - "the resemblance is good", he notes; and "Rosa has lately made a few first rate sketches on Preraffaelite principles" he observes on September 30th that year. In November, John notes that she is working on a portrait of their father. (A very Preraphaelite portrait of their mother remains, fig. 436, though this is dated 1860 and, indeed, shows great advances on the unsure and conventional painting of Edwin). Watercolour sketches from this time

survive, one from August 1852, both coastal scenes, one of the coastguard station near Sandgate and one of cliffs near Folkestone. This latter, at least, must arise from a trip which the artist took with John and their father to Folkestone in August for two weeks. In December that year John notes a plan afoot in the family for Rosa, too, to come to London to live: not as an artist, however, but as housekeeper to John and her other brother Arthur, who would go to London to study music. This plan seems to come to nothing, however, due no doubt in large part to the fact that, from the beginning of 1853, Rosa becomes increasingly unwell, though she continues to work and to travel for work: in January she and John go to Reigate, at the end of June she is in London, and there are three fine pieces of landscape dated Farnhurst, July 1853 (figs. 434 and 435). However, John's diary records that in February, "she seems more enthusiastic than ever notwithstanding suffering physically", at the end of May she is again "unwell", at the end of July "Rosa has been very unwell" and is receiving homeopathic treatment. By the end of November, whatever her illness is, it has become most serious:

> "... to crown all Rosa's health improves not at all under the various means that have lately been tried with so much hope and have failed with so much cold hopelessness... Her life is still dwindling away in which though she bears it with astonishing heroism prevents her doing much or enjoying anything."

In the spring of the next year, John notes that the family would send her to Germany for treatment, but the money is not available; in July, 1854, his diary reads:

> "I have been watching my sleeping sister, she would have me near her, would talk to me, and I know not well how to talk to her - o that I could mitigate her suffering! - o that she were not so bitterly alone, her spirit so worn, so hopeless! - How dark, dreary dark, is her day, how heavy her sorrow!... There is little hope that any decided alteration can be made in the treatment of the disease..."

What the nature of her complaint was is not clear, but certainly she was very ill for a long time, for in October the next year (1855), her father records in his diary that she is attending the Spinal institution, despite having made a trip abroad earlier in the year, (attested to by some fine and delicate drawings of a topographical bent, signed and dated April and July 1855. Indeed, the interest in art seems not to have waned throughout her illness; in March, 1854, John had written to encourage her: "For you I have carved out a membership in the old watercolour society, and that <u>once got</u>, your fortune is made and I have <u>no</u> doubt o your ability to get it, when you shall have got <u>health</u>." A portrait drawing of Rosa by John dated 1855 (fig.42) shows an expression of no great confidence, and a soberness still evident in later likenesses of her (e.g. John's 1867 drawing, fig.437).[186]

It was three years later that Brett made her first foray into the public arena, with an Academy exhibit. It is not possible to tell, from family papers, whether or not she had submitted a work before, which had been rejected: this does not seem impossible, however. The successful work was "The Hayloft" (fig.199), now lost, a small oil in an oval frame. The artist sent it to John, who responded:

> "Dear R, I have not time and have not sufficiently gotten over the excitement to write a criticism on your picture but just write this to say it came safe and to tell you I feel quite snuffed out by it - I am considerably taken by surprise and have not yet recovered my equanimity. it has faults - not important ones, but has also some of the finest passages of painting I have seen by any painter, and the great advantage of the certainty of your doing still better - I think that will do for one dose. A young model who was present soon after I opened it this morning no doubt thought my squeals and high leaps indicated a decided case of deranged mind - she looked on in mute astonishment. You must reconsider your determination about secrecy... I already find it impossible... Woolner to whom I spoke of a wonderful picture by an unknown PRB was agonising in his enquiries - as to how old you were - and whether you were a swell - no suspicion that you were a she. - The thing is infinitely laughable in the intensity of its

> PRism. Write soon and tell me if I may tell
> - indeed I have told lies enough today over
> it I won't go on further. Your JB"

The mystification over the artist's identity, or, more particularly, gender, continued effectively until 1862: the Art Journal critic reviewed her "Thistles" (fig.438) in the 1861 Academy as being by "Rosarius, whoever he may be".[187] When she reappeared at the Academy in 1867, it was under her real name. John's comment on her mystification being "laughable in the intensity of its PRism" presumably refers to the early reputation of the brotherhood for secrecy and the arcane.

There is no doubt that both John and Rosa were keen Preraphaelites, their enthusiasm derived from Ruskin to a large degree, as was the case with so many aspiring artists of their generation. John must, also like others of their time, have tried to interest Ruskin in their work, for in 1860 he wrote to Rosa: "I will tell old White to come and see your Pic, also every one else of consequence - I shall hardly have the face to ask JR to come again - I don't think he would..."[188] Ruskin certainly failed to mention Rosa's debut in his Academy Notes of 1858, neither did he review her work in any of the subsequent Notes, but, as is well-known, the brother John did secure the critic's interest, to some effect. Indeed, Ruskin's championship of John Brett, even though it waned later, made Rosa's brother a much-debated artist throughout the 1860's and 1870's, and it is surprising that she did not receive critical attention simply as his sister, as was female artists' usual fate. Throughout her exhibiting career, however, she attracted little more than half-a-dozen notices.

"The hayloft" may have been exhibited elsewhere than the RA - "You may do as you say abutt sending it to Liverpool, but if Green refuses to take it (he is very particular about his list) you must send it yourself" (John Brett to Rosa Brett, undated latter of 1858) - but, certainly at some point in its travels through the galleries, attracted a buyer, for in July 1859, John recorded in his diary that "Prince will not pay Rosa for her cat." She seems to enter on a new lease

of artistic life with this venturing out into the world of art: in the end of 1858, her brother recorded "Rosa tolerably well as ardent impulsive and unbendable as usual" and noted that she was painting; "Detling Church" and a portrait of Edwin (about to leave the family for the army) are noted in May and August respectively. In May next year she began to paint a study of horsechestnut blossoms with a bird, an insensitive and crudely worked piece except for the feeling for light which it shows. Dated 1859, but not identifiable with any work mentioned in the family papers is a small oil of a mouse among the undergrowth, rich in browns, greens and reds, Preraphaelite in the fineness of its touch (fig. 439). This could perhaps be an anticipation of her 1867 Academy piece "The field-mouse at home", which elicited generous criticism from the Athenaeum reviewer: "a perfect gem in its way, and although comprising nothing more pretending than the little creatures and grass, has plenty of subject." [189] Her next work of scale, however, was the oil which was eventually her next Academy exhibit, "Thistles" (fig. 438), which she commenced in June 1860 and finished before the year was out. Essentially a still-life picture, "Thistles" sets a living group against a bright Kentish landscape, the background more generalised to set off the PR detail of the observation of the main subject; the Athenaeum critic remarked upon it as being "remarkable for fidelity of imitation and solidity", [190] although the Art Journal reviewer chose to make an example of it, saying, "It might be difficult to get more interesting thistles... but they are only thistles after all..."; [191] to devote such attention to a 'low' subject, was in itself a very Preraphaelite move, though this critic does not use the term in his criticism. The curved frame emphasises its Preraphaelite style, and the bright, light hues the artist employs maintain that influence.

Her next work followed this pattern: "Foxgloves" was shown at the RA in 1862. Also dating from this year is the magnificent painting of "the old house at Fairleigh" (fig. 440) which she started in July 1862 and finished in the autumn. It has an address label on the back of it, indicating that the artist sent it away for exhibition, but it did not appear at the Academy. Given her increasing rate of production and evident confidence in her work at this time, it seems unlikely that this pleasant and well-observed work, with its happy

colours and rich, though not obtrusive detail, would not have been shown in some show or other. One other piece which survives could well date from this productive period: a small square oil study of a blossoming chestnut tree in a garden, unfinished and inscribed by a later hand "Garden of their house at Detling"; in its bright greens and its close observation, it is very Preraphaelite, and an advance on "Thistles". It belongs to the artist's family. Another small oil which survives undated, which the Tate Gallery calls "Study of a turnip field..." (fig.441) and dates to after 1863, [192] is probably from the latter 1860's, since its colouring is more mature and more subtly true to nature than her surviving early-1860's work, and towards the end of the decade she turned towards landscape and generally more open space in her paintings than had been the case in the earlier part of the decade ("Thistles", though it has an open background, is essentially a close-up, while the 1860 picture of the artist's mother in a garden has a closed exterior for its background), or in the middle years of the decade (when she did not exhibit, but when she was engaged in portraits and still-lives, to judge from her father's diary and sketches still in the family, done in pencil and pen). A watercolour landscape of 1869, entitled "Barming, Kent" (fig.442) shows a similar subtlety of colouring, though the palette is a very different one, while sketchbook studies of 1870, 1871 and 1872 display a similar intensity. A most arresting feature of this painting is its handling of space: there is no skyline and the middle ground slopes steeply away from a tangled foreground bank.

All of Rosa's recorded subjects in the next two or three years are drawn from nature: her father's diary for 1863 records her activity: in March she is ordering a frame for her picture, a week later ordering more watercolours, the next month she has work rejected by the RA, but in July "Rosa employed Painting in the back Orchard"; the next year his diary tells the same story: in January "Rosa arranging her Painting Room", and "Rosa began Painting Flowers", while in March he is buying her more paint, and at the end of the month "Rosa finished her Flower Picture" and in May "Rosa painting Apple Blossoms"; then in August she went to Dublin for nearly two

months, and on her return "Rosa employed Painting Sea Weed"; in October there is some talk of a work which remains unnamed but is evidently in circulation for display or sale: "Rosa wrote to John and to Green about her Picture"; "Theodor went to London to fetch Rosa's picture". From the latter part of the decade portrait drawings and flower studies survive, and she evidently kept up some production of finished oil pictures, since one was accepted for the 1867 Academy ("The field-mice at home") and one for the 1869 exhibition ("Morning in the marshes"). Little information is available from family records at this period about Rosa's progress, for presumably the main interest would have been John's development under the aegis of Ruskin, but a portrait drawing by John of his sister, dated December 1867 (fig. 437), shows a more confident woman than his earlier drawing portrayed. Thus, it is not surprising that a la ter work than her earlier pieces dates from this time: it is a fine and lovely watervolour drawing, from 1869, inscribed "Barming Kent", which might well be identical with one of two works entitled "Kentish Cornfields after Sunset", which were shown at the Old Bond Street exhibition in December 1869, and noted by the Illustrated London News' critic as "exquisitely truthful and refined." [193] Notebooks and sketchbooks in the possession of the artist's family record that in late 1868 she was studying skies, particularly, and this interest continued into the next year, with special attention being given to sunrise and sunset. These would seem to relate to "Barming". The nature studies continue too: sketches of birds, sheep, trees, landscapes.

Rosa Brett's meticulous, Preraphaelite approach to nature has already been remarked upon, [194] but it is in the sketchbooks of the '70's that it is most evident. The preparatory material, (which, it must be concluded, was not all worked up into oil paintings although colour and texture are meticulously prepared for in her sketchbooks) which dates from this decade, shows her mostly interested in wooded landscapes and skies, the locations of such subject-matter mostly local to her home, and including Bexley (1877), Broadstairs (1879) and typically Kentish scenes characterised by hopping paraphernalia

(1870). The location of a scene is often not noted, but the diredtion of the sunlight and time of day often are, showing that her interest in the subject-matter could be narrowly visual. The diverse and characterful sketchbooks from both the seventies and the early eighties - when some drawings of Bettwys Coed, Snowdon, and other north Wales locations are mixed in with the Kentish (e.g. Sevenoaks, 1881) settings [195] - make it regrettable that the finished pictures she exhibited during this period have disappeared.

She showed at the Academy in 1871, 1873, 1875, 1876 and 1881, and, though the latter two years' pictures were presumably more or less still lives ("Starling and Bluetit", 1876 and "Iris", 1881), the other titles indicate that the works might have drawn on her sketch-book material ("A spring Afternoon", 1871; "A winter Afternoon in Kent", 1873; "A doubtful Greeting", 1875) and the fact that in 1871 and 1873 her Academy exhibits drew critical attention (albeit brief) would suggest that the pictures in question were quite achieved. In both cases, the criticism was from the Art Journal's reviewer, and indirectly suggests Preraphaelite work. The 1871 notice reads:

> "Next in the circuit of the room, two ladies present themselves as worthy of notice and encouragement. "A Spring Afternoon" (55), by Miss R. Brett, is a fresh study from nature, and "A Wotton Glebe" by Miss F. Redgrave, is sparkling, and specially pleasing in the sunny shadow-flecked sward..."; [196]

the juxtaposition of Brett's work with Redgrave's suggests a touch of Preraphaelitism in Redgrave having taken much from her father, whose landscapes are among the most charming examples of Preraphael-itism applied to the face of Nature (although this aspect of his work is not given enough attention), and in the adjectives 'fresh' and 'sparkling' applied to the two women's works. In 1873, in similar vein, Brett is juxtaposed to John Inchbold by the critic who, though enthusiastic over the male artist, simply says of Brett's picture, "Among other pictures in the room are A Winter Afternoon in Kent" (931), Miss R. Brett...(and two other pieces by different artists). [197] The most finished piece that remains, from this

decade, is not a painting but a drawing, of chicks (fig. 200): three separate drawings, framed together, signed and dated 1870 (June) and done in Margate, from the inscription. They are quite charming drawings, showing a fine sensitivity of touch to texture a and young animal form, relating to another smaller pencil drawing, dated 18 May 1873, of a cat lying in straw and inscribed "Portrait of Bunny". These sensitive pieces contrast curiously with a much larger and less delicate drawing of two rabbits under foliage (which however, is undated.) All these pieces are in the possession of the artist's family. The sort of intense observation which produced these drawings evidently went to other natural subjects too: a pencil sketch of flowers dated 25th May 1873, bears the note:

> "Ragged Robins Stamens very short and lights Then the petals. Petals darker on the under-side Then on the upper Calix a rich medder (sic) which varies very much and rather fluffy. Stem rather fluffy and purplish towards the flower. leaves near the flower purplish on the underside."

Rosa Brett's last exhibit at the Royal Academy was her "Iris" in 1881. She was by then 52 years old. Since the 1867 she had exhibited under her own name, but had received little of the notice that her brother was now used to.[198] Though her artistic activity evidently continued - she showed at the SLA in 1880 and 1881,[199] and her sketch books continue until at least 1881 - it brought her no reputation and only slight recognition. There is no evidence that she actually sought fame any greater than, say, being an Academy exhibitor or, indeed, than being the sister of a famous artist, but it seems regrettable that her art was not more regarded in her own time if only because a measure of fame might well have served to preserve her work to a greater extent than has family interest (though it should be noted that this has saved her from oblivion). She died in 1882: her brother's diary for 27 July 1982 reads:

> "The next family event of importance is of the saddest kind: the loss of my only sister Rosa. She died five days before Gwendolen was born... This is a very great

loss to our children who were her greatest pets. Edwin and Alice took care of her during the latter weeks of her life which ended in their little farmstead at Caterham, and the grass grows over her in Caterham churchyard."

She had spent all her life, as many mid-Victorian women did, as a 'relative creature', yet in her work she attained an independence that is impressive, even if it was not recognised publicly in her own day. In the portraits of her which remain, she seems to express in her bearing and expression a tragic lack of joy (fig. 443), but in her best work the delight in nature and keen observation of it, the ever-alert eye and disarming industry, come strongly through to display an artistic potential which it is quite regrettable was never realised. Modesty, allegedly becoming to a lady, served the 'lady-artist' badly.

1. She is sometimes mentioned when either of her brothers, Abraham or Simeon, is under discussion, but even Clayton gives only one page to her (op. cit., vol.2, p.129).

2. See the Manchester Guardian, October 11 1893, for obituary of Annie Mutrie; Clayton actually writes, in her brief account of the two artists, "These ladies have invariably declined, from feelings of delicacy, to make any particulars of their life public." (op. cit., vol.2, p.289) The DNB, however, has an entry on Martha (vol.13, p.433) to which is added a note on Annie.

3. Thornycroft is the only female sculptor of the period whose case history could have been included here, but since she is discussed at some length in other parts of this account, she has been omitted in this section; her life and work are described in Elfrida Manning, op. cit.

4. William Frith, My Autobiography, 1887/8, chapter 52, "Lady Artists."

5. Henry Ottley, ed. G. Stanley, Biographical Dictionary of Painters, etc., London 1866 (with supplement); Sarah Tytler (Henrietta Keddie), Modern Painters and their Paintings, London, 1874, ch.8; Samuel Redgrave's Dictionary, published in 1874, had an entry on Boyce/Wells, but omitted Ward and the two Mutrie's, as well as such candidates for inclusion as Thornycroft, Solomon and Osborn; the preface, however, included the comment that "it cannot be assumed... that all who ought to find a place have been included."

6. Ernest Chesneau, The English School of Painting, trans. Lucy Etherington, 1891; shortly afterwards, Walter Shaw Sparrow's massive Women Painters of the World, London, 1905, obviously intended to rectify the situation of partial recognition by noting seemingly any female who had ever put brush or pencil to canvas or paper.

7. In addition to chapter 1 above, see Parker and Pollock, op. cit. for a more universal and complex investigation of the assumptions and prejudices which put female artists in the position they customarily hold in art history.

8. Connoisseur, September 1824, p.57 and Who was Who, 1916/1928, p.1092.

9. Tytler, op. cit., p.300

10. The connection also extended to make contact with the Williams family, of which Caroline F. Williams was the only prominent member, paralleling Henrietta Ward's circumstance.

11. Henrietta Ward, Memories of Ninety Years, 1924, ch.2, p.22. This, along with the artist's other autobiographical publication, "Reminiscences", 1911, is the main source for this account. The artist's descendants have been very helpful in making works available which were previously unknown.

12. James Dafforne, British Artists, their style and character, no.77 Art Journal, December 1, 1864, p.357.

13. Ward, op. cit., ch.1, p.2.

14. ibid, ch.2, p.28.

15. It cannot be exaggerated, how frequent the incidence of this choice of talents seems to have been in the early years of female artists. It can, of course, be easily explained by the nature of a girl's education at this time, encouraging the arts of music and drawing or painting as suitable outlets for female creativity. Earlier examples of this circumstance can be seen in Angelika Kauffman's sympathetic "The artist hesitating between the arts of painting and music" (1794, Nostell Priory, Yorkshire), or Anguissola's self-portrait of 1561 (Althorp, Northampton).

16. There is no record of her having made it into a painting at any later stage.

17. According to the artist's Memories, the work was two still lifes, but her Reminiscences would have them as two heads. Graves lists them as "Study of heads". Incidentally, he does not list her alleged 1846 entry.

18. Ward, op. cit., ch.3, p.33.

19. Their general style of figure painting was similar, but their choice of settings and their groupings not; Henrietta was more various than Edward, in her production of simple, small-scale domestic scenes as well as complex historical dramas. Without the benefit of seeing more of Henrietta's early, middle and late works, one could only hazard a guess that she would have become less similar to her husband as she went on. However, as the Times critic noted in 1863, "If Mrs. Ward indicates her master in her method, this is only natural. But her picture requires no gallantry or indulgence from the critic on the score of the painter's sex." (May 7 1863, p.7). The artist does not herself meet the challenge of such criticism in her autobiography, either by refutation or by agreement and explanation.

20. Germaine Greer, The Obstacle Race, 1979, ch.2 "Love". Ward is mentioned in chapter 3, "The illusion of success."

21. Ward, op. cit., ch.1 p.1. Similarly, "It was owing to Edward's advice that I concentrated on Art, which I never regretted doing" (ch.3, p.34).

22. "The plan was confided to Wilkie, to whose sense of adventure it made a immediate, if vicarious, appeal. He became a fellow-conspirator and willingly undertook all the arrangements" K. Robinson, Wilkie Collins, 1951, p.50.

23. Ward, op. cit., ch.3, p.41.

24. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.108.

25. In sum, Alice, Leslie, Eva, Flora, Wriothesley, Beatrice, Enid, Stanhope.

26. Ward, op. cit., ch.9, p.124.

27. These works are all untraced.

28. Art Journal, June 1 1851, p.155.

29. For more on the artist's success with collectors, see above, chapter 4, p.251.

30. Respectively, Athenaeum, May 17 1856, p.622; Art Journal, June 1 1855, p.176; ibid, June 1 1854, p.170.

31. Athenaeum, May 20, 1854, p.626.

32. "I determined to go regularly, in spite of very determined opposition from Mr. Jones RA, who was Keeper of the Schools. With an utter absence of chivalry, he actually convened a special meeting to exclude women..." Ward, op. cit., ch.4, p.58.

33. Dafforne, op. cit.: "In order to perfect herself in drawing the human figure, Mrs. Ward, about this time, went through a course of anatomical studies at Mr. Cary's academy in Bloomsbury Street, from which she derived advantages that were impossible to be obtained in any private studio." Criticism of Ward's work almost never concerned her command of figures or anatomy.

34. Athenaeum, March 27 1858, p.407; the work is presently untraced, but the Athenaeum's review of it gives an idea of its subject-matter: "The philanthropist is parting with his cottage-tenants at Cardington; he is seated at a cottage-door; his cane hangs at his chair. It is a father parting with his children. The frank kindliness of his face is well painted, and so is the awe and respect of the child and the buxom mother. The groom with the saddled horses at the inn-door tells the story of departure..." (May 8 1858, p.598).

35. Art Journal, June 1 1858, p.167.

36. ibid, December 1 1862, p.236.

37. Blackwood's Magazine, July 1864, p.87. The other paintings were, respectively: "The Burial of John Hampden", "Luther posting his theses on the Church Door", "La Reine malheureuse", "George Fox refusing to take the Oath", "The Meeting of William Seymour and Lady Arabella Stuart", "The Queen's Highway in the Sixteenth Century".

38. Dafforne, op. cit., p.359.

39. S.C. Hall, Memories, 1871, p.487.

40. The artist herself evidently shared prevailing opinion, that her domestic works were pleasant rather than powerful, and therefore less consequential than the historical drama or moral picture: "I always enjoyed painting tiny children, and generally managed to spare time from more serious work to paint either a group, or single figure in miniature, for Edward's birthday", Ward, op. cit., ch.23, p.248.

41. This last painting and "Queen Mary..." are untraced, while "Sion House" was sold from Christie's, July 14 1972.

42. "Elizabeth Fry" is in a private collection in the USA, although a later replica is in the Friends House, London; "God save the Queen" remains untraced.

43. Athenaeum, May 19 1855, p.591. The Art Journal agreed: "The work altogether is one of great merit - sound and forcible to a degree we very rarely find in the labour of a lady's hand", June 1, p.176.

44. ibid, May 17 1862, p.668.

45. Saturday Review, 24 May 1862, p.533.

46. Ellen Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.164.

47. Times, May 7 1863, p.7 and Art Journal, June 1 1871, p.150.

48. Art Journal, January 1 1863, p.97 and Athenaeum, Jan. 5 1861, p.23 (the painting was engraved in this year).

49. Respectively, Athenaeum, Nov. 8, 1862, p.597; ibid, May 19, 1866, p.675; Art Journal, June 1 1868, p.102; Spectator, June 2, 1855, p.575; Times, May 2 1868, p.11; the variety of the criticism Ward received should not be ignored: a modern commentator has written: "It was agreed that Henrietta Ward was no colourist" and "... most critics were in agreement with Hall that "Palissy" was Henrietta Ward's best picture to date" (Rosemary Treble, Great Victorian Pictures, Arts Council, Great Britain, 1978, p.35), but it was not agreed - the Spectator noticed in 1863, even, that "Mrs. Ward is a better colourist than her husband..." (May 16 1863, p.2008) - while the consensus on "Palissy"'s rank among the artist's works is hardly meaningful when it is realised that this sort of verdict greeted the artist's works almost perennially.

50. "I took members of the Royal Family as private pupils - Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Albany, and her daughter, Princess Alice of Albany, now the Countess of Athlone. During the two years I went to Claremont, she made rapid progress, and only abandoned her studies on account of numerous public engagements. Her daughter, the Princess Alice, came to my studio with her governess for four years"(Ward, op. cit., ch.17, p.198.)

51. Ward, op. cit., ch.5, p.71.

52. ibid, ch.4, p.59.

53. Witness the Times critic, typical of many such instances, when he wrote in reviewing the Academy show of 1863: "Mrs. Ward - grand-daughter, daughter, and wife of artists - if not a member of the Academy has an Academician for a husband, and should write RA after her name, with the Miss Mutries, Mrs. Carpenter, Mrs. C. Newton, and some other of our paintresses, if the Academy were as catholic now as it was in the last century, when it opened its ranks to Angelika Kauffmann and Mary Moser" (May 7 1863, p.7).

54. In contrast, say, to the material comfort enjoyed by the woman in Hunt's "Awakening Conscience", which is supplied by a man, but under very irregular and undesirable circumstances, we are enjoined to think.

55. Carpenter, similarly, received a Civil List pension, not for her services to art but those of her husband, William, who was Keeper of the British Museum.

56. It is difficult to be sure how well-bought she was, since her autobiography makes only passing references to sales and patrons, and press accounts of sales tend to select the most famous artists or works to report, leaving one ignorant of the fate of

less prominent pictures. However, of her celebrated works, at least,"The Princes in the Tower", "Pallissy the Potter" and "Howard's Farewell" were bought immediately or shortly after their appearance, while "The Queen's Lodge, Windsor" was acquired by the Walker AG in 1925 from a private individual, as was the case with "Chatterton" presented to the Bristol AG in 1909. Records of a sale of works at the artist's death have not come to light, as yet. See also chapter 4, above, p.251.

57. Ward, op. cit., ch.17, p.196.

58. The Lady, December 1867, vol.6, p.427.

59. ibid, July 1868, vol.8, p.28.

60. Tessa McKenzie, The Art Schools of London, 1895, p.80.

61. Art Journal, June 1 1879, p.119.

62. She exhibited one work in 1889, one in 1890, one in 1893, one each year from 1903 to 1907; one in 1918 and one in 1921, but no exhibit is recorded later than these, despite the artist's claim to have been represented at the Academy in the year of her death.

63. Connoisseur, September 1924, p.57.

64. Art Journal, June 1 1868, p.120.

65. Saturday Review, May 23 1863, p.662.

66. The Critic, July 27 1861, p.109.

67. Athenaeum, July 20 1861, p.89.

68. For more detailed information on George Price Boyce, see the recent revision of his diaries, published as The Diaries of George Price Boyce, edited by Virginia Surtees, Norwich, 1980.

69. I am indebted for precise information about the artist's life to numerous members of her family, chief among whom Mr. John Street and his son Mr. Jonathan Street, made available copies of letters by the artist and her family as yet unpublished; and Mrs. Anne Christopherson, in whose keeping the artist's sketchbooks remain. Other descendants of the artist allowed me generous access to those works which remain in the family's possession. References here to opinions, actions or events including Boyce, within the artist's family, unsupported by other references, are taken from letters and diaries which I have been allowed to read, but have been asked not to quote directly from, pending publication of the material by the artist's family.

70. Unpublished account of the artist's life written by her daughter, in the possession of the artist's family (though see unpublished BA thesis by Julia Ford, Loughborough College of Art, 1979 on the artist and her husband's work).

71. H.T. Wells, 1828/1903, miniaturist and later portraitist and subject painter.

72. Margaret Fuller, later Margaret Fuller Ossoli, an American feminist, author of Woman in the 19th Century (1845), who died in 1850 aged 40. See Dictionary of American Biography, vol.7, p.63.

73. Harriet Grote, Memoir of the Life of Ary Scheffer, London, 1860; this artist's influence can be seen more clearly in the work of Gallies, who trained under him in Paris in 1851; the year after Boyce's visit, Mary Severn went to work in Scheffer's studio.

74. In her account of the French Pictures at the 1855 Paris Exhibition written for the Saturday Review (December 1 1855, p.80). Jones (the Review's founder) was a friend of the Boyces, and Bevington (The Saturday Review, 1941) claims that the artist probably wrote other pieces for the paper in its first five years (p.294). There is a letter with the artist's sketchbooks dated May 1856 to Jones, requesting payment for "her contributions".

75. A sketch for Millais' oil painting is in the City Art Gallery, Birmingham; the painting itself, which was exhibited at the Academy in 1847, is still in the artist's family. It is much different from Boyce's treatment of the subject, but no other Elgiva was shown at the Academy between its exhibition and Boyce's.

76. See Surtees, op. cit.

77. The former exhibited subject paintings at the RA (1856/61), SI (1856) and NI (Portland Gallery) (1856), which were slightly, though favourably, reviewed; the latter exhibited watercolour portraits at the SFA (1857/8) and is no doubt a member of the Todhunter family which Mary Howitt records visiting on August 23 1853 with Anna Mary (Howitt, op. cit., vol.2, p.104).

78. Boyce was certainly in a minority, for the work in question is the much-discussed "Margaret returning from the Fountain", which other members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle found very impressive, and which generally received a good press; her comment does indicate that she had been led to expect the work to be "marvellous".

79. Academy Notes (supplement), Cook and Wedderburn, op. cit., vol. 14, p.31.

80. Illustrated London News, July 7 1855, p.23.

81. Ford Madox Brown, Diary, May 22, 1855.

82. Athenaeum, July 20, 1861, p.89.

83. The painting is currently in the possession of a descendant of the artist.

84. For detailed information on Couture's teaching at this period, see the excellent Thomas Couture and the eclectic vision, A. Boime, Yale, 1980. (which, however, does not mention Boyce).

85. Photograph in the possession of the artist's family, inscribed in reverse in George's handwriting. The model is interestingly similar to Charlotte Ridley, the model for "La Veneziana"; "Mme. Hereau" is lost.

86. It is not clear whether or not the Couture painting was in his studio at the time when Boyce was there (it is now in the

National Gallery of Scotland), but she might have known it anyway. Couture's influence can be mooted in a more subtle way, in his 'juste milieu' position - a position which Delaroche was also seen, by some, to hold (see "Delaroche and Gautier", exh. cat., National Gallery, 1975: Gautier on Delaroche, 1858); Boyce surely held a similar position in British art, by espousing to some extent the avant-garde (Preraphaelitism) and to some extent the old master tradition (in her Venetian tendencies, for instance), producing - like her French master - a solid and varied body of work that could not be totally subsumed into either mode. A further characteristic of the 'juste milieu' artist is a wide visual net which catches many hints from different sources: in this light, Boyce seems also to have noticed J-F Millet, a drawing of whose from the 1840's bears a marked resemblance to the figure group in "No joy the blowing season brings" (Master Drawings, vol.17, no.1, p.46).

87. Saturday Review, December 1 1855, p.79 and December 29 1855, p.153; and May 10 1856, p.31 to June 7 1856, p.125.

88. Saturday Review, May 10 1856, p.31.

89. ibid.

90. There are more than one red-haired boy in the possession of the artist's family, one being the "Bathaccombe Boy", painted while the artist was in Wales in 1853, and one being a study of a red-haired boy which has not yet been precisely identified. The reference for most of the artist's works is the catalogue to the memorial exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1935, in which 51 of the artist's works were exhibited, but of which visual records do not necessarily exist, and of which a large proportion was destroyed during the second World War, from the collection of Mrs. Arthur Street, in Bath, Avon.

91. This list appears among the artist's papers, and I am grateful to Julia Ford for drawing my attention to it; in testament to the artist's industry, it runs to some thirty projects, and was drawn out in 1861, the year of her death.

92. "Mrs. Wells (Boyce's sister) has some first rate things, and her husband... is not far behind her" (Rossetti to William Allingham, May 10 1861, quoted in Doughty and Wahl, ed., The Letters of D.G. Rossetti, Oxford, 1965, vol.2, p.400).

93. Times, 24 November 1859, p.9. This was a review of the Winter Exhibition.

94. The Critic, July 27 1861, p.109.

95. Illustrated London News, July 27 1861, p.87.

96. She escaped disadvantageous comparison with her husband through being patently a far superior artist; perhaps, had she continued her career, some attribution of her talent would eventually have been made to Couture, even though he was not especially esteemed in Britain at the time. The Critic's elaborate obituary notice, however, managed to haul in the family connection, with reference to Wells and G.P. Boyce, saying "Mrs. Wells was not only wedded to an artist... but came of an artistic stock" (Critic,

July 27 1861, p.109); it was, of course, the case that George's becoming an artist was largely due to his sister's encouragement, anyway (see Arthur Street on GPB, Architectural Review, vol. 5, 1899, p.152).

97. Athenaeum, July 27 1861, p.121.

98. Saturday Review, May 25 1861, p.121.

99. Athenaeum, May 11 1861, p.635.

100. ibid, July 20, p.89.

101. Critic, July 27 1861, p.109. Since femininity in handling would have connoted a tentativeness which cannot be seen in the artist's work, and femininity in conception would have connoted a domestic or sentimental strain which is rarely seen in her ("Peep bo" is a domestic work, "Do I like butter?" could be so construed as sentimental), the femininity of which the critic speaks could best be located in the artist's choice of female protagonists: although her dramatis personae include males ("The Child's Crusade", the several red-haired boys, the Italian boy either "Poverino" or "Serminello") the female characters (the Sybil, Elgiva, La Veneziana, Gretcher, Undine) predominate markedly. The writer's anxiety to keep his subject free from accusations of having de-sexed herself in her efforts to become great, leads him to laughable lengths: she combined, he asserts, with her intellectual qualities "a high and exalted sense of duty, unbounded devotion to husband and children, to household and domestic cares, which were never neglected for her art, but preferred to it" (p.110). - The writer admits that he has no personal actual acquaintance with his subject, however.

102. Letter of June 1861, quoted in "Three Possettis", Stanley Weintraub, London, 1978, p.8.

103. Cook and Wedderburn, vol.14, p.30, note 3. Ruskin wrote to Georgiana Burne-Jones at the same time: "Mrs. Wells is the main sorrow... I am very, very sorry. I did not know her much, but I always counted upon her as a friend whom I could make, if only I had time", ibid, vol.36, p.374.

104. Times, 19 June 1935, p.12. The occasion was the exhibition at the Tate Gallery already mentioned; it included most of the finished works mentioned here. Her work has also been shown posthumously in Birmingham, "Victorian Pictures" 1937 and the Tate "PreRaphaelite Exhibition", 1923.

105. Critic, July 27 1861, p.110; this point had been more deliberately made earlier in the passage, where the writer had declared: "As an artist Mrs. Wells was among the most vigorous and interesting of those (of either sex) who were rising into public notice". However, the final verdict quoted in the text here was followed immediately by the following comment on her gender: "... as well as to the vindication of the capabilities of women in the domain of art. In behalf of that deserving and as yet dropping Cause, how much would such an example as she (with life) could have set have done; how much would it have sustained and fortified weaker fellow-labourers of her own sex."

106. The Brownlows would have found themselves midway between the middle-class philanthropists who ran the Hospital and the plebeian children who were its concern; John Brownlow had, himself, been a Hospital boy, which Emma would know. She lived at home with her family until she married in 1838. Her sister Mary died in 1849, and her sister Johanna in 1874, leaving her as the sole support of her mother, who lived with Emma's family from 1860 and was Emma's concern until her death. Emma's husband died in 1886, leaving her the only support of her own four children from then onwards. John Brownlow, Emma's father, had died in 1873, severing the close connection with the Hospital but leaving a financial relationship between the Brownlows and the institution.

107. "The Orphan" and "The Orphan Friends" are lost, although the former may be in New Zealand, though as yet unidentified.
Another, possibly Hospital-related work, is "Les Orphelins", shown at the SFA in 1873, now untraced. I am very grateful to the artist's grandson and his daughters for giving me access to visual evidence of the artist's early work and those pieces still in the family.

108. In 1864, she showed at least ten pictures; in 1865, at least twelve, and very possibly fourteen; in 1866, eleven; records of her provincial exhibits, however, are incomplete.

109. The artist's grandson's files contain a photo of a painting, signed and dated (possibly 1872), inscribed in a later hand, "Destroyed on voyage to NZ 1896."

110. Whereabouts unknown.

111. See note 106:both her sisters predeceased her, unmarried.

112. Art Journal, March 1 1867, p.88; Evening Star, January 15 1866 (no page reference).

113. Exhibited at the Winter exhibition and the BI, respectively; whereabouts now unknown.

114. Art Journal, July 1 1857, p.215; both works not now known.

115. Unidentified newspaper cutting in album compiled by the artist's grandson; work now unknown.

116. The Builder, April 10 1858, p.243; the work in question was "Our little Brother", the whereabouts of which are now unknown.

117. Art Journal, October 1 1860, p.306.

118. Respectively, ibid, May 1 1861,pp.140; Athenaeum, November 23, 1861 p.693; ibid, February 9 1861, p.200.

119. Illustrated London News, January 20, 1866, p.71.

120. Entry for June 11th in the artist's diary of the trip. All the following quotations regarding the trip are taken from this as yet unpublished source, which was generously made available by the artist's grandson.

121. Edward Hughes exhibited a painting in the 1862 Academy entitled "An English Artist collecting costumes in Brittany."

122. Diary June 9th. The picture referred to is, of course, Whistler's first "White Girl". In the words of a much more avant-garde compatriot, D.G. Rossetti, one finds an interestingly similar failure to appreciate the innovative character of painting in Paris at that time: the Pre-Raphaelite wrote in a letter of 1864: "The new French school is simple putrescence and decomposition..." (Quoted in Hilary Taylor, James McNeill Whistler, 1978, p.25).

123. For visual evidence that the artist does, however, manage to find various costumes that are not ugly and plain, see figs. 3, 4, 34.

124. In the possession of the artist's family there is an oil sketch which is signed 1853 and inscribed "copied from an unfinished sketch by Heaphy Emma Brownlow 1853". Thomas Heaphy junior did live in Henrietta Street, where the Brownlows lived from 1843 onwards, so it may be that the young Brownlow was in some measure his pupil. No other copied material survives among her juvenilia.

125. Compare the verdict of Boyce: "Now a Frenchman's notion of 'high art' consists, first, in an enormous canvas, life (or larger than life) sized figures, and an historical incident - if horrible, so much the better" (Saturday Review, May 10, 1856, p.31); in her notes for this passage, in her sketchbook, she uses the same word, 'painful', as Brownlow: "A Frenchman's idea of High Art consists primarily in a large canvas and life-sized figures and generally some painful or repelling historical ? for a subject."

126. None of these is currently known but the last, which is in the possession of the artist's family.

127. See Benedict Nicholson, The Treasures of the Foundling Hospital, Oxford, 1972 and Nichols and Wray, The History of the Foundling Hospital, London, 1935.

128. There are two versions of the picture, between which the main difference is John Brownlow's age; it seems possible, therefore, that rather than the original being re-exhibited in 1866, this was a showing of the second version.

129. Emma, the twins Marian and Dora, John.

130. These were "'Tis an Old Tale and Told" (1859), "Preparing the Village Guy" (1860), "The Shortest Way Home from School" (1863), "The Beggar's Story" (1867) and "Waiting for the Boats" (1867).

131. I am grateful to the staffs of the Foundling Hospital and County Hall Record Office, particularly Alison Reeve, for facilitating my use of these papers, which relate mostly to the artist's father but which include many letters concerning money matters to, from, and concerning the artist.

132. Respectively, Observer, May 14 1865 (no page reference); ibid, January 20 1867 (no page reference); Athenaeum, January 26 1867, p.125. The work is not now known.

133. Illustrated London News, January 20 1866, p.71.

134. Ladies Companion, February 1866 (from album compiled by the artist's grandson).

135. The Spectator mentioned her among painters who "exhibit domestic figures or groups of merit" at the RI in 1857 (February 14 1857, p.163), while the Times review of that exhibition in 1858 mentioned her in the company of G. Smith, Bromley, Hemsley, Barnes, Henderson, and Nicol, and "others much too tedious to mention" (February 8 1858, p.9); this was the continuing note of status she was accorded critically - worthy of mention but not outstanding.

136. On the contrary, most of her letters are concerned with her indigence, and reveal her financial dependence on the pension derived from Donald King's investment in the Drury Lane Theatre trust fund.

137. For some account of Waterford's life, see Virginia Surtees, Sublime and Instructive, London, 1972, and the same author's Charlotte Canning, London, 1975.

138. Illustrated London News, June 11 1892, p.134; Penwick-Miller was a feminist writer and journalist active in the latter two decades of the century. Dr. Rosemary van Arsdel is currently researching her work.

139. The reference is to Jopling's Hints to Amateurs, published in 1891 by Chapman and Hall. For a less favourable reference to this volume, see the Magazine of Art, March 1891, p.xviii.

140. Another period in Paris intervened, in the latter twenties: see Surtees, op. cit. (Charlotte Canning) for details (ch.1).

141. Surtees, Sublime and Instructive, p.1.

142. The speaker is Sophia Thellusson, later Lady Rose, who was a friend to Waterford in young and adult years; quoted in Hare, op. cit., vol.1, p.153.

143. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.338. For reference to Clayton's approaches to the artist for the book, see below and Hare, vol.3, p.361/3.

144. Charles Stuart, Short Sketch of the Life of Louisa Marchioness of Waterford, London, 1892, p.6.

145. Hare, op. cit., vol.1, p.243; probably relevant here are pieces listed by Hare as "Boy minding Crows", "Woman gathering Sticks", "The Ox-Plough", "The Gleaners", "Girl with a Milk-Pan", "An Irish Peasant", "Irish School-girl", "The Cottage-door, a scene in Ireland", and others (Hare, vol.3, p.193ff).

146. ibid, p.243 and 245.

147. Letter dated November 21 1849, quoted in Hare, op. cit., vol.1, p.334; this series of drawings is now in the possession of the current occupant of Ford Castle, Lord Joicey; in sepia on 44 sheets, the set consists of "Hungry, and ye fed me", "Sick, and ye visited me", as well as "Thirsty, and ye gave me to drink", with their negatives (contrasts, in the artist's words). The drawing she mentions is paralleled by a small girl giving a

passing man water just drawn from a communal well, at which two further females stand. The pair, however, has an alternative couple of drawings, but it is unclear which of the four drawings were the final two; the alternative to the drawing with the dying soldier is a tavern scene where four men sit around a table quaffing from tankards, coupled with a more sober hostelry in which men, women and children are present, and a young woman helps a small boy to drink out of a pitcher she holds. I am grateful to the owner for allowing me access to these drawings.

148. The topical theme of gleaners and reapers was treated by her a number of times, and often given a Biblical slant, as in "A Time to Sow", "The Joyful Harvest", "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy", "And the Reapers are the Angels", "Ruth and Naomi" (all listed by Hare, as above, note 1-5), but occasionally with a contemporary urgency, as in "A Gang of Women weeding and Overseer - a Protest" (exhibited in 1910, Carlton House Terrace). The ever-popular source of Shakespeare also claimed her, in "Ophelia", "Othello", "As you like it", Hamlet", and her numerous Romeo and Juliet pieces (these latter are discussed by the artist in letters to Mrs Bernal Osborne, February 19 1863, Hare, vol.3, p.239 and December 15 1867, Hare, vol.3, p.291 and to EVB, December 1 1875, Hare, vol.3, p.364). Another, specific, instance of a reflection of modern trends is in the title "Helpless, Hopeless, Hopeless", which is unfortunately not known any longer (exhibited Carlton House Terrace 1910).

149. Letter to Janet Ellice, dated November 14 1851, quoted in Hare, op. cit., vol.1, p.347.

150. Undated letter to Mrs. Bernal Osborne, quoted in Hare, op. cit., vol.1, p.247.

151. Letter to William Allingham, June 26 1855, quoted in Doughty and Wahl, op. cit., vol.1, p.257.

152. Letter to the artist's mother, July 1 1855, ibid, p.260.

153. Clayton, op. cit., vol.2, p.339.

154. Quoted in Surtees, Sublime and Instructive, p.4 and 6.

155. Mrs. Stewart Erskine, "The Drawings of Lady Waterford", Studio, 1910, p.286.

156. Letter to Lady Waterford, probably July 1 1855, quoted in Surtees, Sublime and Instructive, p.8; see also Pamela G. Nunn, 'Ruskin's Patronage of Women Artists", Women's Art Journal, vol.2, no.2 (Fall/Winter 1981), for more on Ruskin's artistic significance to Waterford.

157. Quoted in Surtees, op. cit., p.10, 12, 13, 15; these letters usually contained drawings, prints, etc. of Ruskin's chosen models for his correspondent.

158. The artist's diary, quoted in Hare, op. cit., vol.3, p.254.

159. Letter to Mrs. John Leslie, January 10 1863, quoted in Hare, vol.3, p.236; a Holy Family couched in classical language, appeared at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877 (no.168), while in 1873 she sent another drawing of the same subject to the Grosvenor (see letter to EVB, quoted in Hare, vol.3, p.317).

160. I am grateful to the current incumbent of Ford, Lord Colgey, for allowing me access to the preparatory material for the frescoes which is in his possession. Ford and its inhabitants provided much material for the artist during the 1860's and 1870's, such as "Ford School, Standard One" (fig.433) at the Grosvenor in 1880, "The Forge", in the Victoria and Albert Museum, "Ford Night-School", "Carol-Singers at Ford", "Mrs. Heslop feeding Peacocks" and others listed by Hare (see above note 145).

161. Hare's list of subjects attempted shows how many themes were tried time and time again, while her surviving drawings show how incompletely she could leave an idea. She evidently, however, had so many ideas for images that some must have remained unworked or incomplete through an embarrassment of riches. Hare wrote to his mother while staying with the artist in 1861, "Painting is her great employment, and all evening she makes studies for the larger drawings which she works upon in the mornings" (Letter dated October 17 1861, quoted Hare, vol.3, p.141).

162. Hare, op. cit., vol.3, p.222.

163. Waterford heads the Amateur section (vol.2, p.336/340).

164. Letter to EVB, October 31 1875, quoted in Hare, vol.3, p.361; Charles Stuart comments on the relationship between the two amateurs thus: "Mrs. Richard Boyle (EVB), a cousin of Lady Waterford's, was too congenial in artistic taste and talent, as well as in feeling, not to be a most welcome addition to her society" (Stuart, op. cit., p.20). There are occasional similarities between their separate works, as well as a common spirit: see, for instance, EVB's drawings "The Age of Innocence", and "Love and Loyalty" in the 1895 Call album in the Victoria and Albert Museum. In neither case is it the artist's best work which resembles her cousin's.

165. Letter to EVB, May 23 1878, quoted in Hare, vol.3, p.388; Mrs. Steuart Erskine quotes a letter from the artist of 1879 which says, "I can only say these exhibitions are the best levellers I know; one has no more illusions about oneself and no flatterers are of avail" (Erskine, op. cit., p.283).

166. Letter to EVB, December 31 1879, quoted in Hare, vol.3, p.399.

167. Boyle's published sets of drawings included "A Children's Summer" (1857) and her illustrations "Fairy Tales" by Hans Christian Andersen (1872) and "Beauty and the Beast" (1875); see above, chapter 4 and chapter 5.

168. Letter to EVB, February 23 1880, quoted in Hare, vol.3, p.400.

169. Letter to Honoria Thompson, March 10 1881, quoted in Hare, vol.3, p.409, and to the same, November 28 1881, quoted in Hare, vol.3 p.415.

170. Surtees, Sublime and Instructive, p.3.

171. Erskine, op. cit., p.284.

172. The Pall Mall Budget, June 9 1892, p.834.

173. Illustrated London News, November 28 1863, p.551.

174. Her forays into Shakespeare have already been mentioned; her modern themes included numerous studies of figures characteristic of their location, "The Sick and Wounded of Bournaki's Army", "The Baby King of Spain.. 1869", "Dora".

175. Catalogue, Loan Exhibition of Watercolour Paintings by Louisa Marchioness of Waterford, Carlton House Terrace, April 1910, p.9; this appreciation, published anonymously but said to have been written in 1892, is not the 1892 memoir written by the artist's cousin Charles Stuart, though the most likely authors of it are Stuart, and Hare.

176. Surtees, Sublime and Instructive, p.5 (no references); the Magazine of Art's review of her work in the Old Masters Exhibition at Burlington House in 1893 claimed her composition to be supreme (p.114). This exhibition contained seventy-five drawings, along with work by Blake, Calvert and Palmer.

177. The boys were John, Arthur, Edwin and Theodore.

178. Various branches of the artist's family have generously made available to me the visual and written material which they possess relating, not only particularly to Rosa Brett, but to the whole family. Any sketches or drawings, sketchbooks and finished works whose whereabouts are known, which are mentioned here, are in the possession of the family unless otherwise stated.

179. This unpublished diary was made available to me by the artist's family, to whom I am grateful; for discussions on the material I am also grateful to David Cordingly, who is researching into John Brett.

180. This work is not now known, but was presumably of a marine character.

181. He is already recorded by Rosa as having paying pupils in her diary, while the remarks about buyers and commissions indicate that John has been promoting himself locally for some while.

182. See, for instance, Allen Staley's "Pre-raphaelite Landscape" (Oxford, 1973), which devotes a chapter to the work of John Brett and which has evidently been written with the benefit of materials relating to both artists in the possession of their family, yet makes scant mention of Rosa, and not as an accessory to John's early work.

183. The meaning is that Rosa may not stay out unaccompanied, so is obliged to adapt her activity to the inhibitions of her brother's timetable.

184. The rationale behind this choice of pseudonym is unclear. Although it seems an obvious play on the artist's first name, such an explanation would seem to be ruled out by an entry in her father's diary noting a letter sent to Rosarius, at a period when Rosa was at home, indicating that the name was used for someone else known to the Brett family. However, what is very clear about the pseudonym is that it was meant to obscure the artist's identity and gender.

185. To what extent she would have been able or willing to expedite such business is doubtful, since women of her class and situation had little experience in such matters, and Rosa seems to have been singularly retiring in the matter of business; in 1864, for instance, "Theodor went to London to fetch Rosa's picture" (the artist's father's diary, entry for 6 December); and it is difficult to tell from John's letters whether he was being selfish in burdening her thus, or generous in encouraging her to such responsibility. The former seems the more likely, judging from the character his writings generally convey, as he becomes more established.

186. The papers in the artist's family do not cover the 1860's, which tantalising gap in the Bretts' history might, it is tempting to think, conceal the nature of Rosa's illness and her recovery from it.

187. Art Journal, July 1 1861, p.195.

188. Letter dated March 22 1860. There is no evidence to support the idea that Ruskin ever saw or encouraged Rosa's work.

189. Athenaeum, June 1 1867, p.732. The artist's critical notices were very scant; it was the Athenaeum's critic who had noticed her 1861 exhibit "Thistles", and when she showed at Old Bond Street in 1869, the Illustrated London News critic made mention of her, though briefly.

190. Athenaeum, May 25 1861, p.700.

191. Art Journal, July 1 1861, p.195; another instance of the oppressive character of the hierarchy of genres.

192. The painting was included in the exhibition "Landscape in Britain", 1973, as no.316.

193. Illustrated London News, December 11 1869, p.599. The insistent regionalism of the artist in terms of choice of subject make her interesting in a way neither her brother nor the other Pre-raphaelites were. Had her work been more widely seen, perhaps this element would have been recognised.

194. See above, chapter 5, p.362.

195. Much of her travelling in this period seems to have been done in the company of the artist's brother's ever-increasing family, and his interests are reflected in the quayside and boating studies in some of her sketchbooks.

196. Art Journal, June 1 1871, p.150.

197. ibid, August 1 1873, p.238.

198. John had by this time been hotly debated in critical columns for twenty or more years.

199. She showed "Tinley Common" (1880) and "Springtime in Kent" (1881); it seems probable that in these later years, the artist drew and studied but did not make many pieces up to finished paintings, since if she had,some such works would surely have survived within the family as her early work has done. There is the distinct possibility of her illness having left her susceptible to premature

ageing or a recurrence of weakness or debility. It should be noted though, that her rate of exhibition was no slower than it had been even in her earlier, more productive years. She must have produced, in finished work, at least twice the number of works she exhibited, if watercolours and oils are taken into account.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

In the second edition of An Art Student in Munich, published in 1879, Anna Mary Howitt reflected on the time at which the book first appeared - the beginning of the period which has been discussed here; she wrote:

> "The difficulties which the habits of society of that day placed in the way of a young woman seeking an independent career in Art, or, indeed, in any other direction, have now almost wholly passed away, and thus, one of the objects to which the book was designed in its modest way to contribute has been largely attained." 1

Much, indeed, had been attained between 1857 and 1880: the cause of women's art had its heroines - those who had struggled for it and died (though not because of it), like Laura Herford, Joanna Mary Boyce, Mary Severn, Margaret Foley, and Margaret Carpenter (in some measure, their forerunner);[2] and the practice of women's art had its leaders - those who had been acknowledged (and, to some extent rewarded), like Henrietta Ward, Martha Mutrie, Rosa Bonheur and Mary Thornycroft. The woman artist had become visible, during this time.

She had been sighted:

> "It scarcely seems fair to discuss the subject of female influence on art without admitting reference to the fair sisterhood of the present day. There has been such a wonderful stride made in this matter in the lifetime of this generation that thousands of eyes must flash fire and thousands of lips curl scornfully at an exclusion that so materially affects the facts of the case..." (1865) 3

> "(We do not wish to) ignore the merits of any of the female artists of England - and there are many possessing talents worthy of all recognition..." (1864) 4

She had been encouraged:

> "But if, in the presence of all these noble productions of man's genius the student feels oppressed by a sense of her own littleness, and considers it as a vain hope that she should ever rank with a Leonardo da Vinci, a Raffaelle, a Michelangelo, a Guido, a Luini, a Van Eyck, a Rembrandt, or a Rubens, it should be remembered, that what has been attained may again be accomplished, and perhaps exceeded" (1866) 5

She had been acknowledged to be struggling with particular difficulties:

> "... so much has been said about the restricted opportunities of women, - from inability to devote themselves entirely to one pursuit, when they are expected to be equally accomplished in many. Indeed, so numerous are the calls for employment of time in such phases of occupation as are indivisible from them in the capacity, whether it be of daughter, sister, wife, or mother, - that such extraordinary excellence can seldom reasonably be expected" (1862) 6

> "Women's home duties are the obstacle to their success... Women will justly answer that, taking life against life, those other duties, above and beyond a person's main profession, which fall on them are in many ways more engrossing than the man's. Even a single woman cannot well avoid giving more time to household details than a man; much more, if she be married. Nor is it here a just reply to say, as some have said, that our fair poet or painter should make her art so absolutely the end of her life that she must therefore live single..." (1865) 7

She had been championed against unfair treatment sanctioned by tradition:

> "Several of the most able and spirited of modern writers (and artists), French as well as English, have challenged criticism disguised in masculine noms-de-plume, a defiant, ironical coup de main we scarcely condemn as long as we

have two degrees of comparison and criticism for the work of the respective sexes (1865) 8

"The general laws of criticism... have been framed with reference to what men have done, and there are several particulars in which, to render them truly applicable to women, they must be modified" (1865) 9

Yet, at the same time, she had hardly won the day:

"Women's place in contemporary art is a strong contrast to women's place in literature. It is yet confined, yet unconquered as a broad acknowledged ground, in spite of the personal fame achieved by such masters (sic) as Rosa Bonheur, Nelly Jacquemard, Mrs. Ward, Madame Escalier, and others at home and abroad. Celebrity comes quickly to the clever pen, but the pen must help the painter to find his (sic) fame, for his brush will not conquer it alone. And the women artists of modern days have been, somehow or other, neglected and ignored by most authorised dispensers of fame" (1872) 10

Certain ideas had been reformed, but not revolutionised:

"Without any intention of left-handed compliment, it deserves to be called a masculine work" (1878) 11

Indeed, as the mid-century period was succeeded by the 1880's, the gains that had been made for women artists and their work in the previous three decades, were being vigorously undermined by certain quarters of opinion. An article in the Art Journal of June 1879 heralded "An Exhibition of Women's Work", which was to be a display of that stereotypically feminine and aesthetcially downgraded skill, needlework:

"If the position of the needle as the sole or the chief implement of the graceful industry of women has been somewhat impaired by the attention which the ladies of our own day have given to the pencil, the chisel, and the brush; to music, to literature, or to a wide range of occupations once considered proper to the ruder sex; none the less does the

> needle continue to be, par excellence, the women's implement" (1879) 12

while three pages were given over, in the Magazine of Art in 1881, to an article entitled "Artist and Wife", which began: "Women are content, as a rule, to be complementary creatures..." 13 and pursued the point thus:

> "the glory of the arts is the most attractive and delightful to woman - who is a satellite at heart. To appreciate neglected genius, to encourage genius in its temporary failures, to foster it in its struggles, and to enjoy its successes, is a mission which the young, generous, and sentimental feminine heart is inclined to dream over as the happiest of human destinies... that end (that) is the dearest and nearest to the wife's heart - her husband's success in his career" (1881)

Such continuing resistance to the concept, and success, of women as artists was reflected in other, practical ways, such as the failure of the Royal Academy schools to permit their female students to study from the nude model before 1893 (when it was no longer such a valuable point to concede).

The modern female artist is considered a somewhat anomalous and unwelcome creature by many administrators, theorists and makers of art: her mid-Victorian sister was also thus seen, though she forced a place for women artists within the world of the arts, and established the female artist as a viable being, welcome or unwelcome. A study of her such as this has been, surely proves not only her existence, but also her interest and value, and suggests that she - like her modern-day counterpart - should be not only a welcome addition to the art history of her own time, but should be welcomed as an integral part thereof.

Notes

1. Howitt, op. cit., second ed., preface; by this time, the author was herself no longer active in the arts to a degree that was conspicuous: William Rossetti had noted in 1870, in his diary, that "she does not now pursue art, except under the form of Spirit Drawings" (William Rossetti's Diary 1870/3, ed. Odette Bornand, Oxford, 1977, December 12 1870).

2. Herford died in 1870, Boyce in 1861, Severn in 1866, Foley in 1877, Carpenter in 1872.

3. "Woman's Work in the Art-World", The Builder, April 8 1865, p.237.

4. Art Journal, June 1 1868, p.120, discussing Henrietta Ward's "Pellissy the Potter".

5. "Woman and the Arts", Professor Donaldson, The Builder, January 6 1866, p.8; this was an address to the Female School of Art students.

6. The Builder, May 24 1862, p.367, reviewing the Royal Academy; the specific reference is to the works in the show of Ward, Benham Hay and Solomon (respectively, "The Despair of Henrietta Maria", "The Prodigal Son" and "Fugitive Royalists".)

7. "Women and the Fine Arts", Francis Palgrave, Macmillan's Magazine, 1865, p.126. The author goes on, however, to rather undercut the power of the point he asserts here.

8. "Woman's Work in the Art-World", The Builder, April 8 1865, p.238; this article finds much more to say about literature than painting or sculpture, but is evidently addressing itself to both verbal and visual arts.

9. Palgrave, op. cit., p.118.

10. "Women's Pictures at the Academy", Woman, May 16 1872, p.334; the writer is explaining why s/he has chosen to review women's work separately, as a positive point of discrimination. The review was in two parts, its second episode appearing on June 1, p.364.

11. The Times, August 10 1878, quoted in the Englishwoman's Review, September 14 1878, p.430, discussing Hosmer's "Pompeian Sentinel" at the Guardi gallery in the Haymarket.

12. Art Journal, June 1 1879, p.107; the writer, one F.R.C., speaks as if the debate over women's fit occupation were only a topical one, whereas it had, of course, been raised and to a large extent answered about two decades earlier: "A contention is now hot, we will not say between the two sexes, but between two schools which take opposite views as to the position of the line that should be drawn between the habits and the occupations of the sexes..." Note that a line - some line - "should be drawn" between man's sphere and woman's sphere.

13. John Oldcastle, "Artist and Wife", Magazine of Art, 1881, p.479; this journal continued in the eighties to discuss women's relationship to the arts, displaying a variety of positions on

the question - for and against - that were not obviously always expressed by the writer named here: see, for instance, Lesder Scott, "Women at Work: their Functions in Art", 1884, p.99; Katharine de Mattos, "Flowers and Flower-Painters", 1883, p.-53; Charlotte J. Weeks, "Lady Art-Students in Munich", 1881, p.343; "Woman and her chance as an Artist", April 1888, p.xxv.

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Royal Academy Council and General Assembly minutes

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